

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Revolutionary Communist Group

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JON KEMPSTER

HANDS OFF

THE MIDDLE EAST

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... one can say that the revolutionary movement in the advanced capitalist countries will remain a myth as long as the struggles of the workers in Europe and in North America against the capitalist system are not closely united against imperialism and world capitalism with those of the hundreds of millions of oppressed people in the colonies.'

(Statement from the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arab Gulf, May 1969)

The recent developments in the Arab Gulf have settled one decisive question of world politics. They have swiftly demolished the claim that the defeat of the socialist bloc and the end of the Cold War would inaugurate an era of democracy and peace between nation states. The massive build up of the US war machine in the Gulf shows how militarism and war are necessary characteristics of imperialism's defence of its interests all over the world. It shows that the capitalist system cannot survive without neo-colonial oppression to safeguard imperialist access to cheap sources of fuel and raw materials.

It is no accident that the first major development after the collapse of the socialist bloc has been the biggest US military operation since the Vietnam war, to secure control of the world's largest oil reserves in the Middle East. Far from moderating imperialism's predatory character, the collapse of the socialist bloc has now removed all restraints on its drive to carve up and divide the world.

A second fundamental characteristic of imperialism emerging from war preparations in the Gulf is the growing clash of interests between the major imperialist powers. The lukewarm Japanese and German response to US requests for financial help with its military costs indicates their resistance to accepting unqualified US control of the Middle East and its oil. The current President of the EC Council of Ministers,

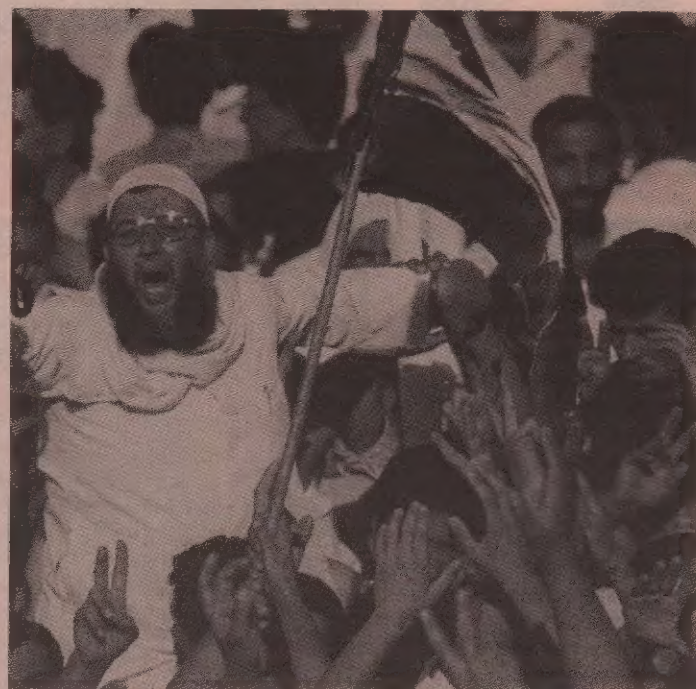
Gianni De Michelis, reflected this position when he said '... there should be no taxation without representation.'

As we argued in our last issue (Editorial *FRFI* 96 August/September) the London and Houston summits forced the US to acknowledge the emergence of a world in which Japan and Europe, led by a united Germany, would become a challenge to the US and carve out their own spheres of influence throughout the world.

Already the new Europe's GDP is over 90 per cent, and Japan's 60 per cent of that of the USA. Of the largest hundred companies in the world, 40 are from the EC, 39 from the USA and 15 from Japan. Of the 200 leading world banks, 65 are from the EC, 51 from Japan and 36 from the USA. The emergence of three more equally matched imperialist blocs make new conflicts inevitable.

Under imperialism, the control of the world's oil supplies has always reflected the relative strength of the contending imperialist powers. British domination over Middle East oil began to be challenged in the inter-war years by US imperialism which by then was emerging as the major imperialist power. By the 1960s the US had achieved a dominant position in the Middle East. To safeguard their positions, Britain and the US created a system of puppet regimes throughout the region through military intervention in the Arab world: Iran (1953), Jordan and Lebanon (1958), Oman (1957-59 and 1965 onwards), Kuwait (1961), Bahrain (1962 and 1965), North Yemen (1962 and 1970), Saudi Arabia (1963).

In different periods, Zionism, Iran under the Shah, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt, after its defeat in the 1967 Arab-



Jordanians opposing US intervention in the Gulf

Israeli war, have all played a critical role in defeating movements which challenged imperialism's hegemony in the region. Through repression and calculated handouts of a portion of oil wealth imperialism has succeeded in undermining the anti-imperialist movement in the Arab world.

Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait threatened to upset this strategic system of alliances in a period when the US economy, with an unprecedented foreign debt of some \$600bn, was entering a recession while facing a challenge to its economic supremacy. It seized the opportunity to use its immense military might built up in the Cold War years to reassert its dominant international position.

The third and frequently ignored fundamental feature of imperialism exposed by the Gulf crisis is that the prosperity of the imperialist nations, em-

bracing a significant section of the working class, is only possible through the plunder and exploitation of the oppressed nations. The resulting containment of the class struggle in the imperialist countries is dependent on this plunder and exploitation. Where labour and social democratic parties have emerged, they represent the interests of the more privileged layers of the working class. They have proved to be wholly dependent on imperialism and have been just as ready as the capitalist class to carry out imperialism's predatory actions.

In Britain, the Labour Party is continuing its long historical role as a loyal servant and agent of imperialism in the Middle East and the Gulf. When Iranian nationalist Prime Minister Mohammad Mosadeq nationalised the oil industry in 1951, it was the Labour government under Attlee which organised a world wide embargo of Iranian oil and

conspired to bring down the Mosadeq government. This was accomplished in 1953 by the CIA with British complicity. The brutality of the British intervention in the Gulf under Labour governments in Oman (1964 and 1974) and South Yemen (Aden - 1964-1967) is well documented.

In keeping with this record and its class interests the Labour Party has adopted a position as warlike and as militaristic as the Tory Party. The United Nations cover for Labour militarism should deceive no one. Labour's emphasis on a UN role expresses only its leaning towards an alliance with European imperialism rather than harbouring, as Thatcher does, illusions of an independent British imperialism allied to the US. Like the US and the Tory Party the Labour Party is determined to destroy any challenge to imperialism's strategic control of the region.

The miniscule Labour left's pacifism is in reality a figleaf for imperialist intervention against the Arab people. They want to starve Iraq into submission, to subjugate it by 'peaceful UN sanctions' not a war which would see 'the Arab nations solidly united against the West.'

The abject failure of the British left to build a united opposition to imperialism's war drive is comprehensible only in the context of its subservience to the interests of the Labour Party and Trade Union movement.

The British left have refused to place demands for Kurdish and Palestinian self-determination at the centre of their work even though this would enable them to build alliances with the tens of thousands of Palestinian, Kurdish, Arab and Turkish workers in this country. Such unity could become a focus for drawing the oppressed

workers in Britain into organised political struggle. Instead they still harbour the illusion that the Labour Party and the Trade Union movement are the instrument for political change in Britain. This reflects the petty bourgeois class character of these organisations which have always refused unequivocally to take the side of the oppressed in Britain or internationally.

The economic and political consequences of US imperialism's intervention in the Gulf will exacerbate inter-imperialist tensions. The near doubling of the price of oil and the cost of this military adventure threaten to send the world into a severe recession with devastating consequences for the oppressed nations.

Political opposition to imperialism in the Arab nations will become a focus for opposition elsewhere especially in the Third World. The social and economic consequences of a recession in the imperialist countries offer the prospect for a renewal of class struggle. The opportunity exists to unite the struggles of workers in Europe and North America with the hundreds of millions of oppressed peoples opposing imperialism. It has to be seized. Without it as the PFLOAG statement says 'the revolutionary movement in the advanced capitalist countries will remain a myth'.

All revolutionary and democratic forces in the Middle East are opposing imperialism's war-drive and the puppet governments which have welcomed and aided US forces. Communists in Britain should have no hesitation in joining these revolutionary and democratic forces. That is why the Revolutionary Communist Group advances the demands:

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BIRMINGHAM SIX

Pressure grows to free innocent men

MAXINE WILLIAMS

On 29 August, Home Secretary, David Waddington, referred the Birmingham 6 case to the Court of Appeal. This is the second appeal in two years. The latest decision comes after mounting pressure to free the Six following the release of the Guildford 4. The grounds given for referring the case for appeal is that the inquiry by Devon and Cornwall police has indicated that police lied about the times at which notes were made of an interview with Richard McKenny.

All that remains of the case against the Six - if the tissue of lies and manufactured forensic evidence could ever be called a case - are the confessions which the police beat out of them. At their unsuccessful appeal in 1988, lawyers for the Six argued that a schedule of interviews drawn up by Detective Superintendent George Reade, head of the police inquiry, was in fact a blueprint for police perjury. This was denied by the police and rejected by the Law Lords. The latest evidence on the McKenny interview strengthens the 'blueprint for perjury' argument.

No date has yet been set for the appeal, nor is it yet clear whether the man who will lead the Law Lords hearing the Appeal will be Lord Lane. He rejected their appeal in 1988, claiming it had made him more convinced of their guilt and would be mightily embarrassed if he now had to eat his words. It also has yet to be seen whether the authorities will, as they did in the Guildford case, simply not oppose the appeal and therefore allow the men to go free without a hearing of the evidence.

If the Six are released on the basis of doubts about one interview then it will fall far short of the demand of the Birmingham 6 for their innocence to be acknowledged. Successive governments, Labour and Tory, as well as the police and judiciary, have kept these men locked up in the face of overwhelming evidence of their innocence. A 'technicality' would let these forces off a difficult hook. It would obscure the real sordid history of this case.

The Birmingham 6 and Guildford 4 frame-ups have blighted the lives of the ten and their families and friends. A crime of terrible proportions has been committed against them. Will anybody pay for this crime? ■

■ *Guardian* columnist Melanie Phillips' article on the Birmingham 6 (7.9.90) is one of the most ignorant and malicious seen in recent years. Just when it looks as if the Six may be moving towards release Ms Phillips said that if their convictions are quashed, 'it doesn't prove they didn't do it'. Whatever happened to the doctrine which says that the accused is either found guilty or is innocent? Ms Phillips has rules of her own. She also has an inexplicable fondness for judges. She agonises over Lord Lane's 'to sit or not to sit' dilemma. She has read his appeal judgment in 1988 and was struck by 'what then appeared to be an overwhelming prosecution case.'

It is a great shame that she has clearly read nothing but Lord Lane's judgment. Every single doubt that she expresses has been dealt with at length by campaigners and by Chris Mullin's book. Why, Phillips asks, did two of the Six buy single and not return tickets if they were short of money? The answer: they did not have enough money to buy a return. Next: why did none of them let their families know they were coming to Ireland? Answer: it was unclear when

McDade's funeral would be and whether some of the Six could raise the fare. Homes in nationalist Belfast did not all have telephones. Next: why were plastic bags moved in and out of one of the Six's house at night? John Walker said that he stocked materials for raffles in aid of prisoners. The IRA man interviewed by Mullin in the book categorically denies that Walker's house was used as a dump for arms. Moving bags into a house at night is evidence of nothing.

Finally Phillips asks why, if the men were beaten, were there no marks on their faces in court? The Six first appeared in court for a few minutes. They were clothed. Most of their injuries were beneath their clothing. But the first solicitor to see Hunter, for example, just before his court appearance saw that his chest 'was covered from his navel up to his shoulders with diagonal scratch marks...' By the time a doctor came to examine the men all had been viciously beaten by prison warders. Nevertheless doctors found that injuries on some of them were older than would be explained by the prison beating.

All of these facts are available. Phillips is either lazy or wicked. Either way she should be sacked. The crime of locking six innocent men up is shared amongst the British establishment. Just because Ms Phillips is a journalist rather than a judge doesn't mean she didn't do it. ■

Lord Denning: older but not wiser

JOHN MALONEY

The arch-reactionary Lord Denning, former Master of the Rolls, has once again stepped into the open with a clear announcement of his contempt for the working class.

As a prominent and influential member of the British legal establishment, his comments in a recent interview carried in the *Spectator* magazine cannot be dismissed as those of a senile old man. They are actually a reflection of the scant regard that those in powerful positions in this country have for justice and human rights.

In the space of one short interview this racist, sexist, homophobic, anti-semitic, chauvinist tyrant blurts out his class standpoint: '... institute of marriage is going down... no end of one-parent families... they're never called bastards...'; he lets fly his opinion of homosexuals: 'Oh I don't mind 'em not being in prison, but I hate it being put on a par with other things. And lesbianism... oh, no!'

The man's establishment viewpoint, obviously teased out of control at this stage, lets us know that 'in my young days, juries were all middle-aged,



middle-class, middle-minded'. He carries on to give us a glimpse of how, as he says, 'an inbuilt feeling of what justice should be' operates: the Birmingham 6 should have been hanged, 'They'd have been forgotten, and the whole community would be satisfied.' Had the same criteria been applied to the Guildford 4, British justice would 'probably have hanged the right men.'

With his vilification of the lower orders and the working class satisfied he turns his venom on his peers who've let the side down. Leon Brittan turns out to be nothing more than 'a German Jew, telling us what to do with our English law'.

These views lay behind Denning's major law judgments: the refusal to allow the Birmingham 6 to take a civil action about their beatings; anti-abortion legislation; anti-trade union decisions. Without his judicial robes he stands exposed as a right-wing fanatic. ■

An alliance of sorts

July and August saw the spread of violent conflict between ANC and Inkatha supporters from Natal province to the Transvaal. Characterised by most of the British media as tribal conflict between Zulus and Xhosas, the reality of the war is political not tribal. By the end of August the role of apartheid's police was becoming clear. The publicity given to what racist whites happily call 'black on black violence' has disguised the growing discontent. The 'climate for negotiations' has made little difference to the daily lives of most black people. At the top of this volcano, the ANC leadership is rushing to negotiations with the regime, offering what its staunchest supporters describe as necessary compromises to ease its path. CAROL BRICKLEY reports.

THE BACKGROUND TO CONFLICT

The warfare in Natal has devastated the province for the last four years leaving more than 100,000 people homeless and claiming the lives of more than 4,000. The conflict is not a result of the simple tribal hatreds which exist only in the minds of white racists.

Inkatha was formed by its President, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, chief minister of the Kwa-Zulu bantustan, as an ethnic organisation. Although ostensibly open to all, the vast majority of its members and its ethos are Zulu. The apartheid bantustan policy relies heavily on fostering ethnic divisions. In the 1970s Buthelezi was courted by the ANC as a progressive bantustan leader who opposed apartheid and rejected phoney independence and Buthelezi's claim of membership and allegiance to the ANC was not challenged until the late 1970s. This allowed Inkatha to recruit popular support in Natal on the backs of the liberation movements.

Inkatha thrived in the region until the growth of the UDF and the independent trade unions in the heavily industrialised Durban area in the early 1980s. Buthelezi formed UWUSA (United Workers Union of South Africa) to oppose COSATU, and in 1985 UWUSA organised scabs during the SARMCOL strike. Inkatha was responsible

for the murder of several shop stewards, and the policy of forced recruitment to UWUSA and Inkatha escalated and spread the violence. There was little doubt even then that Inkatha's actions were backed by the regime. In 1987, out of 1,000 detainees in the region, none were Inkatha members.

The violence has continued and escalated, allowing the regime, earlier this year, to lift the State of Emergency in all regions except Natal and to send in the 32 Battalion, notorious for its barbarities in Namibia and Angola. The conflict has proved resistant to calls from the ANC leadership for peace.

There is no single explanation for why the violence spread to the townships around Johannesburg, where traditionally Inkatha support is small (two per cent outside Natal) and the ANC is strong. The conflict does however have all the hallmarks of a destabilisation campaign orchestrated by the regime. The police have been openly involved on the side of Inkatha. Following conflict in Sebokeng, on 25 July Inkatha launched a savage attack on ANC supporters at Inxhala railway station in Soweto, one week after the stayaway organised in Soweto to oppose violence in Natal. This was also within a few weeks of Buthelezi's rally to launch Inkatha as a national political organisation. By 23 August more than 500 people

had been killed. Buthelezi certainly wants to claim a place at the negotiating table and, having failed to stop the violence, the ANC is under pressure to agree a Mandela-Buthelezi meeting.

At what level the regime is behind the violence is unclear; certainly its police and security forces are involved whether officially or unofficially, and it is lapping up the consequences like a cat that got the cream. Already press censorship has been reintroduced and if de Klerk and Defence Minister Malan choose to send the troops back into the Vaal townships, the ANC leadership can have little to argue having welcomed their arrival in Natal.

THE UPRISING SUMMERS

At grass roots level the townships are seething with discontent. For months the headlines have concentrated on the rapport between the Nationalist government and the ANC leadership. At township level, this has had few benefits. More than 70 per cent of South Africa's population is under 25, and it is a generation hard hit by growing unemployment and homelessness, and schooled from an early age in the struggle. The townships are surrounded by vast squatter camps which have mushroomed in the last five years. Many of the squatter camps - home for millions of people - are threatened with demolition and homelessness is becoming a flashpoint for popular anger.

Rent and consumer boycotts are rife. After five years of continuous rent boycott, the residents of Soweto alone owe R500m and the puppet administration is now threatening to cut all services. Official and unofficial strike action is widespread. At the end of July 27,700 workers were on strike, with major actions promised for September and October in opposition to the Labour Relations Amendment Act.

Against this background the ANC and PAC have begun the process of open organisation inside the country. The PAC is firmly against negotiations in the current circumstances (see interview with Gora Ebrahim). The ANC is pursuing negotiations and it is this which is compounding pressure on its new organisational structures.

ALLIANCE WITH THE APARTHEID REGIME

The so-called 'talks about talks' began on 2 May and resulted in the Groote Schuur Minute. This agreement established a working group to make recommendations on the release of political prisoners and gave temporary immunity to selected ANC members. Overall the agreement established a 'common commitment towards the resolution of the existing climate of violence and intimidation from whatever

quarter as well as a commitment to stability and to a peaceful process of negotiations'.

Mandela then embarked on a world tour which included 'cordial and friendly' meetings with Thatcher and Bush during which Mrs Thatcher was praised for her 'stand against apartheid and racism' and thanked for her help in securing his release. More accurately, Mandela indicated that the armed struggle would soon end in exchange for the release of political prisoners. In an interview in *New Nation* (27 July-2 August) Thabo Mbeki, ANC International Affairs director, said that a suspension of the armed struggle was the logical outcome of the Groote Schuur Minute, and certainly no one could dispute that. The scene was now being set for the next round of talks on 6 August.

The regime, however, was also well aware of the implications of Groote Schuur, and in the lead up to the launch rally of the SACP at the end of July, authorised a sloop on leading Umkhonto we Sizwe and SACP members claiming a coup plot. 'Mac' Maharaj, Billy Nair and about 40 others were detained under s29 of the Internal Security Act (ISA). Ronnie Kasrils and Chris Hani, leading figures in Umkhonto we Sizwe, had to go underground despite the temporary immunity granted in May. In response the ANC leadership stated that the detentions would not interfere with the 6 August talks.

Following the talks on 6 August, which were hailed as successful, the Pretoria Minute set out a programme for the release of political prisoners between 1 September and 31 December, and the ANC confirmed the cessation of the armed struggle, although the terms of this are as yet unclear. Both Chris Hani and Winnie Mandela stated that the armed struggle will resume if negotiations break down, but sections of the ANC leadership are less keen to make such clarifications.

There is more at issue here. The ANC leadership had all along maintained that these were 'talks about talks' and that negotiations would only start when the five conditions of the Harare Declaration (OAU, October 1989) were fulfilled. The conditions were said to be non-negotiable, but in fact the ANC has found itself negotiating these terms. The armed struggle has ceased in exchange for the promised release of political prisoners. Detentions are still taking place. The State of Emergency has not ended in Natal and the provisions of the ISA being used in current conflicts look increasingly like emergency powers. Political trials have not ceased although there is a moratorium on hangings. Troops have been welcomed into Natal and may be used elsewhere if conflict continues.

The problem goes deeper. Only a few weeks ago it was argued by Mandela that sanctions would remain until the implementation of a non-racial constitution. More recently he has offered an end to sanctions in exchange for a statement of intent. Most people believed that the ANC was committed to a constituent assembly elected on the



basis of one person one vote, to draft the new constitution. But on 12 August the *Sunday Star* reported that plans are being made for an interim government with the ANC sharing power with the Nationalists and that the ANC is willing to compromise on the demand for an elected constituent assembly. 'A more informal negotiating forum representing major political groupings is said to be more likely'.

The ANC's failure to demonstrate control of its supporters in the current conflicts has put it under pressure to produce the goods, but at the negotiating table de Klerk looks more in control. De Klerk is unlikely to concede an elected constituent assembly voluntarily since support for the Nationalists has plummeted. The latest opinion polls indicate that if a white-only election were held now, the ultra-right Conservative Party would take power. To deal with this, the Nationalist Party announced in August that membership would be open to blacks, and an alliance with Inkatha is rumoured. For his part, Buthelezi has announced that he occupies the centre ground of the political spectrum, with both the ANC and the Nationalists moving in his direction. He

has promised to form an alliance with whichever arrives at the centre first.

Following publication of the Pretoria Minute, Mandela responded to a question in a television interview asking about the possibility of an ANC/Nationalist Party alliance: 'In a way there is an alliance now - we have started some form of alliance already'. This is undoubtedly true and it is the nub of the issue. The ANC has always been a broad alliance of forces against apartheid. Whilst trying to maintain the support of the radical township youth, it is making overtures to conservative bantustan leaders, and South African and foreign business interests. Now the Nationalist Party is to form part of the alliance. The question must be asked: can such a cross-racial alliance withstand the pressure of totally conflicting interests? As part of an Interim Government, how will the ANC deal with township unrest, armed actions by the PAC or BCM, the trade union struggle which might destabilise the negotiations? And how far will its capacity to renew the armed struggle or open opposition to the regime have been allowed to disintegrate before the volcano erupts? ■

On compromises

How have the newly launched Communists responded to the current situation? The *African Communist*, journal of the South African Communist Party, in its latest editorial (No 122 Third Quarter 1990) argues that there is now a dual power situation: 'The regime controls the civil service and the security apparatus, but the ANC controls the streets'. This is arguable and it may be that recent events have overtaken this standpoint. It goes on to argue that the liberation movement is clear in its adherence to principle whilst the regime is dithering and uncertain. In reply to those 'who cry "sell out" and "treason"' (so we assume there must be such voices) it quotes Lenin:

'The term compromise in politics implies the surrender of certain demands, the renunciation of part of one's demands, by agreement with another party. The usual idea the man in the street has about the Bolsheviks, an idea encouraged by a press which slanders them, is that the Bolsheviks will never agree to a compromise with anybody... Nevertheless, we must

say that this idea is wrong. Engels was right when, in his criticism of the Manifesto of the Blanquist Communists (1873), he ridiculed the declaration "No compromises!" This, he said, was an empty phrase, for compromises are often unavoidable, forced upon a fighting party by circumstances, and it is absurd to refuse once and for all to accept "payments on account"...' (Collected Works Vol 25, p305)

History will judge if the ANC and SACP have remained true to principles, to their class, their revolutionary purpose. But those of us who have accepted Lenin's *Collected Works* as a guide to Lenin's intention by reasoning on beyond the quoted passage. Lenin was talking about compromise with the Mensheviks and SRs, their nearest rivals, and specifically a compromise with the bourgeoisie. He did not offer a compromise either, without retaining the Bolsheviks' aim: the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. Joe Slovo has recently renounced this doctrine. ■



G O R A E B R A H I M

PAN-AFRICANISM THE NEXT STAGE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN REVOLUTION

The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) has been promoted for some time in the bourgeois media in Britain as an extremist organisation isolated from the main political developments taking place in South Africa as a result of its opposition to negotiations with the racist regime at the present time. More recently, however, that assessment is being revised as support for the PAC has grown in the face of continuing state violence and no tangible change in the conditions of the vast majority of black people.

Behind the scenes the British and other European governments are talking to the PAC, and the apartheid regime is trying to open negotiations with it. The PAC is becoming a major political force in South Africa. On a recent visit to Britain Comrade GORA EBRAHIM, the Foreign Secretary of the PAC, spoke to Carol Brickley and David Reed about the most important developments. *FRFI* is pleased to publish this wide-ranging and informative interview in which the issues of negotiations, a constituent assembly, township violence and the political strategy of the PAC are dealt with in depth.



What has happened to the PAC since 2 February when it was unbanned? The 2 February statement from de Klerk merely recognised the existence of the PAC *de iure*, it was already there *de facto*. The PAC utilised this opportunity to strengthen itself at grass roots level.

Prior to the unbanning we had created organisations that were openly Africanist in orientation: the youth wing AZANYU; the student wing PASO; the trade unions, both in NACTU and in many unions within COSATU; MWASA, the Media Workers' Association; the Black Lawyers' Association; and the Azanian Women's Organisation. All these had been brought under the umbrella of the Pan Africanist Movement.

Soon after the unbanning of the PAC, the PAM held a Congress and decided to become PAC Internal. The

PAC Internal would be given the task of the armed struggle and the diplomatic offensive. It was also decided that the PAC structures would remain intact. That is, that we would now have an open internal PAC leadership, the external PAC leadership and structures, and the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA). There were very clear divisions of tasks between them.

We have succeeded in strengthening the Pan Africanist organisations. Reports and surveys show the growing strength of the PAC at grass roots level.

Can I press you on that? The British press claim that the PAC is isolated because of its no negotiations position, and further that the armed struggle, by the PAC or ANC, is now a fiction.

Right now what everybody is dis-

cussing inside the country is not negotiations, but the question of creating a conducive climate for negotiations. De Klerk claims that by unbanning the organisations and by opening, as he says, the door for people to come and join him at a prepacked negotiating table, he has met the preconditions for negotiations. There are others who feel that they should negotiate the preconditions.

The position of the PAC has been a very principled one. The Harare Declaration, which is an OAU position, and the United Nations resolution, unanimously adopted in December 1989, make it clear that there are five preconditions which the regime must meet in order to create the conducive climate. They are the unbanning of the organisations, release of political prisoners, lifting of the state of emergency, the unconditional return of the exiles, and with-

drawal of the troops from the townships. Only one, the unbanning of the organisations, has been met. Others have been either partially met or not met at all. So the conducive climate does not exist. We are not in any way marginalising ourselves because the negotiations have not started.

In an interview in *FRFI* in November 1989, the PAC argued that the Harare Declaration in itself would not constitute a fundamental basis for negotiations, or create a conducive climate. Has anything changed from your position then?

Nothing has changed. What we are saying now is that the climate for negotiations does not exist. In order to pin the conducive climate to practical issues, we are pinning it to the preconditions in the Harare Declaration. We do not say that once those preconditions have been met, a climate would automatically exist and we would negotiate. The PAC is saying that once those preconditions have been met by the regime unconditionally, we can then move towards the question of a mutual cessation of hostilities. That would be the next step required under the Harare Declaration and the United Nations resolution. Once that has been achieved, we still don't say that we would negotiate. We will demand, as the PAC, that what has to be negotiated is the new constitution.

This will not be negotiated between the PAC and the regime, nor do we think it should be negotiated by any other organisation and the regime. It should come about through the election of a constituent assembly, based on one person one vote, for all Azanians over the age of 18 on a common voters' roll. It is that body that will have the mandate to draw up the new constitution. The constitution will not be decided by de Klerk; it will be decided by the elected representatives of the people. That position of the PAC remains unchanged.

Again, last year when you spoke to us, you said that the five pillars of apartheid, the Population Registration Act, the Land Act, the Group Areas Act, the Bantu Education Act, the Tricameral Parliamentary system and the bantustans must go and that these demands are not negotiable. How does this relate to the election of a constituent assembly?

When we enunciated the five political pillars of apartheid, we did not look at them as acts in themselves, but we looked at them as representing

the whole ideology of apartheid. We said at the time, as you have correctly quoted, that these are non-negotiable. The PAC maintains that position today. When the new constitution is being negotiated by elected representatives of the people, these issues will not come up for negotiation.

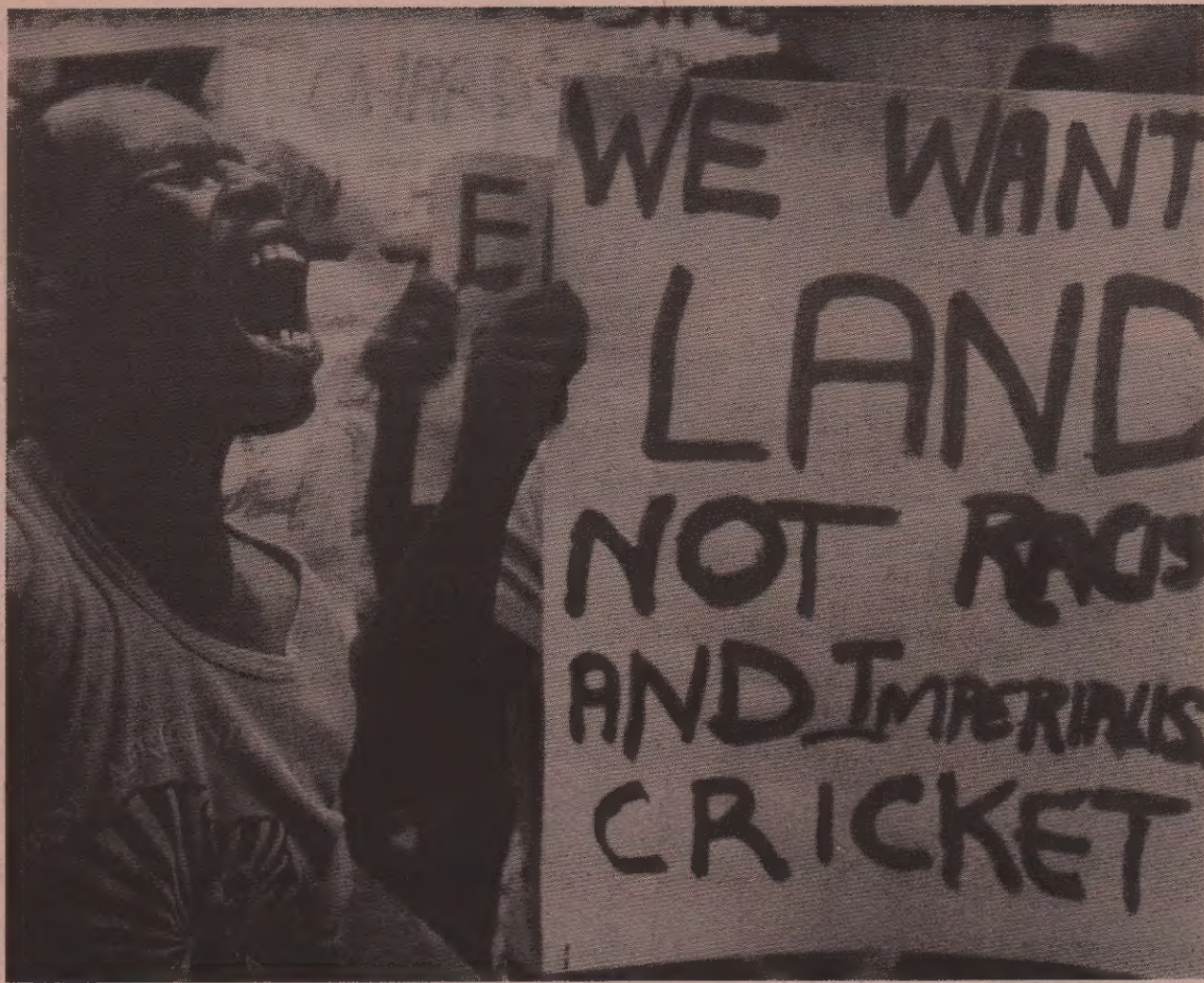
On what basis will representatives be elected for the constituent assembly?

The PAC has put out a document saying that we must establish a common voters' roll, where every Azanian over the age of 18 must register. The vote should be for political organisations. The elections will not take place on a constituency basis. If a political organisation for instance gets 30 per cent of the vote, then proportionately they will have 30 per cent of the seats in the constituent assembly. We have decided that even organisations with less than five per cent of the vote should have a seat. All tendencies, provided they can claim to have democratic support, must be represented, and that representation must be proportionate. Given apartheid, given the demarcation of the country racially, it is not possible at this stage to have elections based on constituencies.

In accepting this demand the racist minority regime essentially will be handing over political power to the majority.

What we are saying is that the constitution must be decided democratically and of course the organisation that has the majority support of the constituent assembly is going to be the one that would lead the constitutional talks, and bring about the desired constitutional change. Of course, the aim of the constituent assembly is to eradicate apartheid, not to perpetuate it, not to reform it, and not to amend it. Agreement with a constituent assembly means acceptance that the task of this body is to eradicate apartheid.

The ANC has now ceased its 'talks about talks' and is ready to commence negotiations. Those negotiations will include not only the five points in the Harare Declaration, but also issues like majority rule. Perhaps the ANC's strategy is to reach an agreement with the regime, rather like the agreement the British achieved at Lancaster House over Zimbabwe's independence, which gives some guaranteed rights to the white minority, and then call for a constituent assembly with those



guaranteed rights in existence. What would be your attitude to that? Right now in Southern Africa there are two models that are being bandied around. First is the Lancaster House type of agreement. The other one is the agreement based on Resolution 435 in Namibia. As you know, in the case of Lancaster House, the constitution was agreed on before the election. In Namibia, a constituent assembly was elected which then drew up a constitution.

In our view, the struggle in Zimbabwe was fought on the principle of no independence before majority rule. That principle was not sacrificed at Lancaster House. Even though the white community in Zimbabwe were given 20 seats, they were not given the right of veto; they could not prevent a two thirds majority changing the constitution should the oppressed majority so decide. So it did not sacrifice the fundamental principle of majority rule.

The betrayal was that the land could be not be repossessed and given to Zimbabweans. This was enshrined in the constitution, it could not be done even without the 20 seats. In fact, Britain and the United States failed to give the agreed money to the incoming government to purchase land. So for us in our country, whoever decides to go into some Lancaster House type of agreement would have to preserve that which was preserved in the Lancaster House agreement - majority rule without a veto by the minority. I am sure that the PAC would be able to accommodate that provided the fundamental principle is not violated.

But we would prefer the kind of agreement that came out of Namibia. It is much easier to draw up a constitution with political organisations which have already measured their strength in the community, and as a result can speak with authority.

The constitution which is drawn up must reflect the majority, reflect their aspirations. It cannot reflect that if there is horse-trading prior to an election.

What is going to force the regime to allow elections for a constituent assembly?

The regime has tried imprisonment, brute force, hanging, dividing our people through the Tricameral Parliament. They have failed. Now they are trying to work out some kind of power sharing with a white veto. There is no need for the oppressed majority to acquiesce to this. We have been waging a very consistent and

principled struggle to eradicate apartheid, and apartheid basically, as far as we are concerned, is white domination. So why accept it in another guise? The international community is also demanding democracy, and we have put forward a clear, democratic principle. We believe therefore that we will gain both internal and international support. I believe that the more our people are united, the more we can unite the international community behind this democratic principle. I do not see what else de Klerk can do other than finally accede to the democratic rights of our people.

Just one final thing on the constituent assembly: the PAC would accept the democratic outcome whatever it was?

Yes. This is a very important principle for the PAC and for every other organisation. Let us accept the verdict of our people whatever it is and work from there. We of the PAC have made it abundantly clear that yes, we will go to our people for a verdict and a mandate; whatever verdict and whatever mandate they give us, we will accept it.

To return to the issue of the armed struggle.

In the view of the PAC, internal struggle including the armed struggle, international isolation and sanctions have been the factors that have forced de Klerk to do what he is now doing.

There are those who say that the armed struggle has not been effective. But you have to be very precise about it. There is first and foremost the commitment to armed struggle. And secondly there is the armed struggle itself. No one can wage an armed struggle without a commitment to armed struggle; that is the first important stage. It is true that we have not been able, due to very many reasons, to develop the armed struggle to our subjective desires. We acknowledge that. But it is wrong to say that the armed struggle has not been effective. If it has not been effective, and if it is merely rhetorical, why is the racist regime so adamant that we must renounce it?

They know what the armed struggle is all about because their police, their army and their institutions have all been targets of the liberation movement, particularly APLA. De Klerk himself has acknowledged that he has been disturbed by the number of police killed in the last year and shocked at the rate of resignations from the police force - at one stage 22 a week - precisely because of the

armed struggle. You should not regard armed struggle simply as pulling the trigger, because armed struggle is a process. Are the liberation movements recruiting people to train them militarily or not? The PAC is doing that. Is the PAC able to move men and materials into the country? Yes, the regime knows we are able to do that. Has the regime been carrying out specific attacks? Yes, they have been doing that. Only a month ago the regime unleashed its special squad to eliminate an entire family, the Chand family, on the borders with Botswana. They didn't do that for nothing. It was precisely because they believed that the Chand family, and particularly Mr Sam Chand himself, were involved with APLA and PAC activities.

The armed struggle has two very important roles to play: the psychological role, used as a pressure against your enemy, and the actual role of the armed struggle. Both have to be maintained so that the struggle is pursued along correct lines.

Is that the process of forcing de Klerk, or the regime, to acknowledge the necessity for a constituent assembly?

No. Our objective is to end apartheid. The constituent assembly with the formula we have put out is one of the many options. The armed struggle still remains an option to overthrow the regime. We have a political op-

tion but we still maintain the option of the armed struggle.

Can we come to the question of the violence in the townships?

The PAC is not directly involved in the internecine conflict that is currently taking place. That does not mean that the PAC is not concerned. We have carried out a very thorough analysis of the violence and concluded first that the violence is a product of apartheid. For instance, the existence of the bantustans, particularly the KwaZulu homeland, is responsible for the escalation of violence, firstly because of the ethnicity which it engenders; secondly, Gatsha Buthelezi, the chief minister of KwaZulu homeland, has appointed himself minister of police and has been negotiating with Adrian Vlok to get weapons for the KwaZulu police which he has then channelled to Inkatha.

Also because of the bantustan structures, single-sex hostels for migrant labourers have been created in the townships, particularly in the Transvaal. These hostels are islands of ethnic groupings and conflict has erupted between them and the community. This is a development caused by apartheid. It is in the interest of the apartheid system to say, 'You see, if we give these people freedom, what are the consequences going to be? The blacks are going to massacre blacks.'

Another cause of the conflict is that some political tendencies try to impose their political views by force in order to establish hegemony in certain areas. We believe that this is undemocratic and must certainly lead to violent conflict.

It is very important that a democratic culture among the oppressed be established with a recognition that there are different political tendencies; that every political organisation, provided that it doesn't advocate racism and ethnicity, should be allowed to put forward its policies and programme in order to win the support of the majority of people. In this regard PAC President Zephania Mothopeng has written to both Buthelezi and Nelson Mandela of the ANC, calling on them to end this senseless carnage, and he has also offered to mediate. Buthelezi has publicly acknowledged this offer but we are still waiting for the ANC to positively respond.

Some may ask, can the PAC play a role in this? There were clashes between the PAC and ANC, in places like Uitenhage and Vosloorus. In both places the leadership condemned the internecine conflicts and then got the grass roots organisations to sign agreements stating that they must recognise the democratic rights of all organisations to put forward their policies without intimidation and fear. These agreements are working and are holding up today.

It is quite interesting to note that

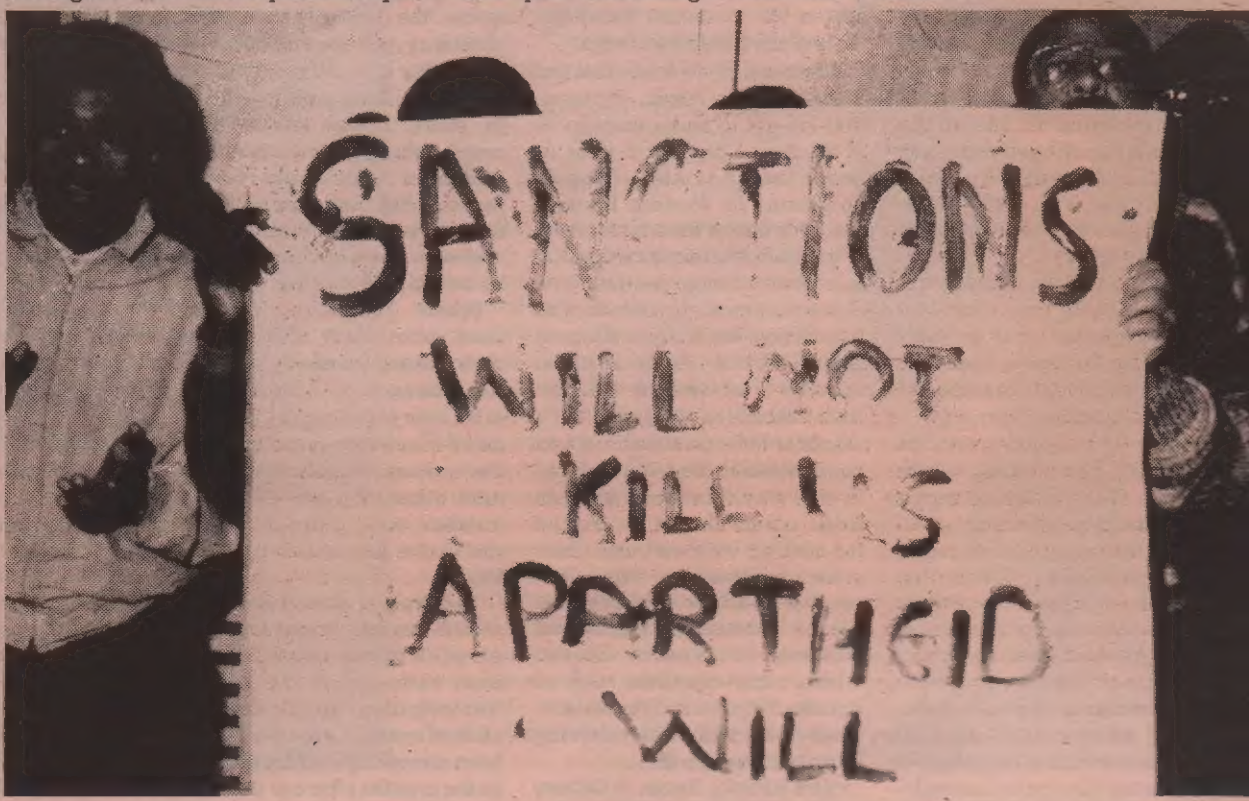
there has been conflict between ANC and AZAPO, between ANC and PAC, between ANC and Inkatha, and so on. We should ask, why is it that the common denominator is the ANC in all the conflicts? It is very important for the ANC to critically examine their own actions in order to find out why they have ended up as the common denominator. This would also assist in bringing an end to conflict.

After the 1984 uprising the wrath of the people manifested itself in the necklacing of puppets. In the early stages it represented the genuine wrath of the people. But later it was taken up by political opportunists in order to eliminate genuine leaders and activists. The PAC played a very important role in putting an end to this barbaric method of trying to resolve political contradictions. The only organisation as of now that still resorts to necklacing is the South African Youth Congress. We believe that it is important that those who have the capacity of educating the people put an end to this kind of thing. This is another form of violence that leads to a further escalation of violence.

Finally, what are the plans of the PAC in the coming period to build support for its political standpoint? There are three things that the PAC is doing and will be doing in the near future. First and foremost we must continue to consolidate work at grass roots level. In the last three months alone we have opened 112 more branches, regions, cells, and offices throughout the country. In fact, in the first two months after our unbanning we had something like 120,000 new members, signed, paid-up PAC members.

The second thing is we have been discussing with other organisations. This culminated in the Congress of the Oppressed with over 2,000 delegates representing different political organisations on the 7 and 8 July. There we discussed three principles, that the five preconditions should not be negotiated; the question of the cessation of hostilities; and the question of a constituent assembly, which was widely supported.

The third thing is that since the PAC has been banned for 30 years, we have not had a national Congress. We have had consultative meetings, but we have not had a mass, grass roots national congress. The PAC leadership feels that every member, every leader must subject himself to the grass roots in order to be regulated and given a mandate, democratically obtained, from the people to continue the struggle. The PAC will now hold its Congress on 19, 20 and 21 October in Johannesburg, where the PAC will review the last 30 years of its experience. It will map out a strategy and tactics for the coming period, and also it will elect its leaders democratically and give it the mandate to pursue the struggle on all fronts. ■



IRA campaign continues

SEAN O'MAOLDHOMNAIGH

Any attempts to let the political situation in Ireland drift out of the news into obscurity by ignoring the plight and censoring the views of the population have been well and truly sidelined by the continuation of the IRA's latest campaign on the British mainland.

A highly successful series of attacks on an assortment of targets has had the anti-terrorist squad running around in circles and created a buzz of reaction in the media. The ability of the IRA to strike at times and places of its choosing, stretching the resources of the state and striking into the heart of the establishment is as real as ever.

The tenth attack this year in Britain led to chaos in London's Stock Exchange when a device was exploded as the place was due to open for business. The following week on 30 July, Ian Gow, Conservative MP and a leading figure in the formulation of Thatcher's policies on Ireland, was executed when a car bomb exploded in his car.



The remains of Ian Gow's car

The state's reaction to this latest attack was the introduction of a telephone hotline to help gather any information on 'strange' movements within the Irish community. Bomb disposal squads around the country

have been kept exceptionally busy safely exploding everything from suspicious-looking cakes to empty cardboard boxes. The armed forces and other prominent individuals who play a role in maintaining Britain's in-

terference in Ireland have had to step up security and take elaborate means to camouflage their identities. The Royal Horse Artillery recently turned out to celebrate the Queen Mother's birthday and found they had to change in the civilian bus they were travelling in rather than risk revealing themselves while en route.

With all this extra precaution and intelligence apparatus mobilised, the police have nothing to show as the IRA continues to strike at will. This lack of results has led the representatives of the police to offer their solution to the situation: they intend to 'sift through the whole Irish community' to harass and terrorise for any snippet of information they can squeeze out of them.

With the police at sixes and sevens as to where will be next, the IRA has said that 'until the British government which legislates for and sustains the occupation of the Six Counties, abandons its futile military campaign, ends partition and recognises the Irish people's right to self-determination and democracy, the IRA will continue to strike whenever and wherever the opportunity arises.' ■

British terror

PAM ROBINSON

The British war against the nationalist community in the Six Counties of Ireland still continues to take its toll in the form of murderous acts and atrocities.

● **North Belfast.** Loyalists shot and injured a nationalist man working fixing security grilles on a house. The owner of the house had only the evening before been informed that he was on a loyalist death squad list by the RUC.

● **Saturday 7 July, Enniskillen.** Two off-duty soldiers attacked and seriously injured Noel Maguire and Steven McCartney as they were walking towards Enniskillen town. They were both beaten unconscious. Maguire's injuries included a fractured skull and a bruised brain. McCartney's injuries included a fractured skull, a facial injury requiring 36 stitches and a serious eye injury. A statement by the RUC confirmed that one of the assailants was an off-duty soldier but did not mention the other soldier.

● **Sunday 15 July, Lisburn Co Antrim.** Loyalists shot and killed Martin Hughes and injured his friend as they were returning to Hughes' home after an evening out. The UFF claimed responsibility for the killing.

● **Sunday 15 July, Castlewel-lan.** The RUC opened fire with plastic bullets on a group of young people leaving a Wolfe Tones concert. During the incident 90 plastic bullets were fired, injuring several of the youth. Geraldine Crane was hit twice in the lower back and head and knocked unconscious. Whilst she was unconscious an RUC officer stepped over her and shot her in the back at point blank range.

● **Tuesday 7 August, Cookstown Co Tyrone.** British Army and RUC carried out house raids

lasting 12 hours during which time residents were held under a virtual state of siege. Car drivers and pedestrians entering or leaving the area were stopped and subjected to searches. At least three homes suffered extensive damage.

● **Thursday 18 August, Co Tyrone.** 18-year-old Private Jonathan William Boyd of the Royal Irish Rangers stole two cars from local residents in the early hours of the morning. In the first incident a family were woken at 2am by Boyd hammering on their front door demanding their car keys. The family, fearing for the safety of their two young children, handed over the car keys. Boyd then drove their car down the road, writing it off in a crash half a mile from the family's home. In the second incident Boyd demanded car keys from another family. During this incident he held two children hostage and threatened to kill both of them and himself. After stealing the family's car he drove as far as Lurgan before being stopped and arrested. Both families agree that Boyd seemed to be under the influence of some drug. The RUC has since tried to play down the incident.

● **Castlewel-lan Interrogation Centre.** Patrick McDaid from Derry was viciously attacked while he was being held in Castlewel-lan interrogation centre. His injuries included bruises to both his arms and legs, cuts and abrasions to his head, a perforated ear drum and a neck injury causing severe pain. McDaid was attacked, verbally abused and threatened during four-hour interrogation sessions carried out by four officers operating in two-person shifts during a whole day.

● **Wednesday 22 August, Cappagh Co Tyrone.** 40 soldiers desecrated the grave of IRA Volunteer Eugene Kelly, murdered by the SAS in 1987. In the attack the headstone was smashed. ■

Show trials of Irish prisoners start in Germany

IRELAND SOLIDARITY

On 16 August, the trial against the Irish prisoners Gerry McGeough and Gerry Hanratty, held on remand in harsh conditions in West German prisons for nearly two years, finally commenced in the notorious 'bunker' of the Düsseldorf Supreme Court. This 'bunker' has been the scene of many political show trials in West Germany's recent history, where special juryless courts preside over controversial cases, the most notorious being the trial of the 16 Kurds for alleged membership in a 'terrorist organisation' which will continue to run concurrent with the trial of the two Gerrys.

The Public Prosecution has ensured the backcloth necessary for a sensational trial of international significance; some 146 witnesses are to be summoned to give evidence, 14 expert witnesses are to be called to provide specialist knowledge where needed. One of these expert witnesses, a handwriting specialist by the name of Ockelmann, has already been publicly discredited although the Public Prosecution readily availed of his services in the past to convict prisoners to long sentences in highly dubious cases. A handwriting analysis conducted by Herr Ockelmann is supposed to link the two Gerrys to the explo-

sion at the British Army barracks in Duisburg in summer 1988. Even the renowned Association of Forensic Handwriting Specialists in Germany has officially distanced itself from Ockelmann due to his outrageously inaccurate findings and the Public Prosecution has now even stripped him of his office. It remains to be seen how Ockelmann's handwriting analysis will stand up in the forthcoming trial of the two Gerrys, particularly as his 'evidence' forms the basis of the Duisburg charge.

There can be no doubt that the West German Public Prosecution are out to make scapegoats of the two Gerrys at a time in which the IRA is intensifying its operations in Western Europe. The function of the trial is clearly to publicly announce the IRA as a 'terrorist organisation' - its aim is not simply to sentence the two Gerrys for alleged offences against British Army installations on West German soil. The Irish liberation struggle as a whole is to be criminalised and condemned in Western Europe. In this way, European anti-terrorist norms should be created for dealing with national liberation organisations. West Germany is clearly setting an example for repressing struggles and conflicts in Western Europe where other countries such as France, Belgium and the Netherlands seem still to be behaving more cautiously. ■

Ireland Solidarity, Giessen, W Germany



Gerry McGeough

■ Here in Frankenthal, where I've been held since 31 August 1988, the conditions include: 5 months total solitary confinement; arms handcuffed behind my back during recreation for 116 consecutive days despite the heavily armed security presence; the prohibition against attending religious services or partaking in sports, as well as access to educational facilities. In short, I was subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment which was totally inexcusable and unnecessary from a 'security' point of view and was, quite obviously, a tactic aimed at 'breaking' me!

Whilst there has recently been some slight lifting of the restrictions, basically nothing has changed. By judicial decree, I am permanently held in a small maximum security cell in the prison punishment block and, other than one hour's recreation each morning, spend the entire day under lock and key!

The type of official mentality which has sanctioned these deplorable prison conditions has been extended to the general 'investigation'. In this field, the code of conduct appears to have been drawn up by Machiavelli. In the months after our arrest, at



Gerry Hanratty

least six international police forces engaged in frantic activity in an effort to secure 'evidence' to support the charges which had been levelled against us.

Among other things, diplomatic pressure was brought to bear on the Swedish government in an attempt to have them betray their own rules and make available highly confidential alleged political asylum papers for police use in the 'investigation'. These papers were supposedly given to the Swedish political refugee authorities by me while allegedly seeking political asylum in that country in 1983. The Swedes, who like to promote themselves as guardians of international democracy, justice and human rights, gave in to pressure and the normally slow-moving Swedish bureaucracy moved with lightning speed in emptying their archives of alleged asylum papers which are, by rule, subject to 50 years' confidential security! The outcome of all this being that these alleged political asylum application papers now constitute 90 per cent of the 'evidence' against me in a German legal process - 7 years after they were compiled! ■

GERRY McGEOUGH



On its annual delegation to Belfast, FRFI joined the thousands who marched on Sunday 12 August to commemorate the 19th anniversary of internment.

Members of the delegation also visited prisoners in the H-blocks, met the Campaign for Lifers and participated in the West Belfast Festival, a celebration of the culture of resistance to British occupation.

The delegation was given warm hospitality by local families. Over 250 copies of FRFI were sold.

In memoriam

The Revolutionary Communist Group and Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! salute the courage and dedication of IRA volunteer RAY MacLOCH-LAINN who died on Monday 9 September 1985. He spent ten years in British prisons from 1974 to 1984. Throughout his life, inside and outside prison, he was a Republican fighter, a socialist and an internationalist. Communists and Republicans and thousands of prisoners in Britain will always remember him.

The Revolutionary Communist Group and Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! honour the memory of JIM REILLY, Luton Sinn Féin and Home Counties organiser for Sinn Féin (Britain), who died on Friday 26 September 1980. Right up to the moment of his death, Jim Reilly continued his lifelong struggle as a revolutionary Republican to free Ireland from British rule. For this he earned the hatred of British imperialism which hounded him to his death.

GULF CRISIS

WHY IMPERIALISM PLANS BLOODY WAR

The imperialist war preparations in the Gulf and the Middle East have nothing to do with the 'defence of small nations', 'Kuwaiti sovereignty' or with principles of democracy and national self-determination. US imperialism is mounting its biggest military operation since the Vietnam war for one purpose only - to ensure that it keeps control over Gulf oil reserves which represent a 'stupendous source of strategic power'. EDDIE ABRAHAMS analyses imperialist intentions.

The 2 August Iraqi invasion of, and subsequent annexation of, Kuwait upset a carefully constructed arrangement which had secured imperialist control of the region. With one blow, Iraq became the possessor of 20 per cent of the world's oil reserves. With this wealth and its 900,000 strong battle-trained army Iraq posed a threat to Saudi Arabia, the other major oil producer in the Gulf.

Under the guise of defending Saudi Arabia from Iraqi 'aggression' the US commenced military operations. However imperialism's real aim is to cut the Iraqi regime down to size. President Bush expressed frankly what the affair was really all about:

'our jobs, our way of life, our own freedom and the freedom of friendly countries (would) all suffer if the control of the world's great oil reserves fell into the hands of Saddam Hussein.'

Indeed the history of the Middle East this century has to a large degree been shaped by imperialism's efforts to suppress the Arab anti-imperialist movement in order to control the region's oil. Control of the world's oil production and chief oil reserves constitute a critical political and economic foundation for imperialism, its wealth, its power and its privilege. And the Middle East and the Gulf contain at least 66.3 per cent of these reserves! In comparison the US has only 4 per cent. Saudi Arabia has estimated reserves of 252,000m barrels. The US has 35,000m.

The major imperialist powers consume 49.1 per cent of all oil produced, the United States alone guzzles a massive 25.6 per cent of world out-

put. Without a constant supply of Gulf oil, their economies and profits would suffer heavy blows. The United States imports more than 45 per cent of its oil, 25 per cent of it from the Gulf with 10 per cent from Iraq and Kuwait. Japan imports all its oil, 45 per cent of it from the Gulf with 10 per cent from Iraq and Kuwait. Germany, the other major imperialist power, imports 97 per cent of its oil with at least 40 per cent from the Gulf. Is it any wonder then that imperialism is prepared to spend 2bn a month and deploy anything up to 250,000 troops in the Gulf, in addition to 45 warships and hundreds of fighter and bomber planes, anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles and a massive arsenal of other lethal weaponry? Such money imperialism never spends on democracy. Democracy is not profitable. But Gulf oil is. And in many more ways too.

THE INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF GULF OIL

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait also threatens to jeopardise a system of reactionary alliances in the Gulf through which imperialism has strengthened its grip across the Middle East and Asia. The Saudi Arabian regime is a case in point. It willingly does imperialism's dirty work. It was responsible for financing the Afghan counter-revolutionaries to the tune of billions of pounds, it was a conduit for money and arms to the Contras in Nicaragua and is the main financier of reactionary Muslim fundamentalist movements devoted to the eradication of the communist movements in the Arab world.

Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states have also tried to subvert the revolu-

tionary character of the Palestinian liberation movement by pouring millions into the coffers of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Such funding was designed (and to a certain extent has succeeded) to strengthen the compromising and vacillating bourgeois wing of the Palestinian national movement and to consolidate its domination of the PLO at the expense of the working class and oppressed.

But the political and economic influence of Gulf oil extends well beyond the Middle East to Turkey, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, South Korea and elsewhere. Nearly four million migrant workers from these countries are employed in the Gulf forming 69.8 per cent of the labour force in the Gulf states. Working as servants (20 per cent), unskilled labourers in the oil and construction industry and in the public services, they enjoy none of the political and social rights of local people. In Kuwait alone there are 100,000 Sri Lankan and Filipina maids.

These workers send home up to \$10bn a year in remittances. By no means sufficient to raise the mass of the population out of poverty these sums nevertheless help keep the wheel of imperialist exploitation turning. Egyptian workers send nearly \$3bn, Jordanians \$1bn, Pakistanis and Indians \$2.2bn and \$2.5bn respectively. Sri Lanka depends on remittances for 40 per cent of its income. These remittances play a crucial role in stabilising the imperialist controlled economies of these countries and serve to weaken the anti-imperialist movements by buying off a tiny section of the work-

ing class and the petit-bourgeoisie.

It is in defence of this vast structure of imperialist exploitation, critical to the survival of imperialism, that the US's awesome military machine is being augmented by imperialist forces from Britain, France, Denmark, Italy, Canada, Netherlands, Australia and Belgium. West Germany and Japan are respectively substituting for some US forces in the Mediterranean and offering financial assistance. The bourgeois ruling classes of Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Morocco, Pakistan and Bangladesh have also committed forces to the area either independently or under the auspices of the Arab League.

THE GLOBAL CONTEXT FOR IMPERIALIST ATTACK ON THE GULF

The collapse of the socialist bloc and the effective end of the USSR's role as an international power has significantly added to the brazen and arrogant militarism and aggression being displayed by the imperialist powers. For the moment there is no countervailing force or influence to stem the tide of imperialist aggression. Indeed much of the initial imperialist mobilisation received the active support of the Gorbachev government. Imperialist and indeed Soviet ideologues claimed that the end of the Cold War ushered in an age of world peace and democracy. On the contrary. The collapse of the socialist bloc has whetted imperialist appetites for plunder and increased the danger of war. The imperialist powers are everywhere moving more confidently to carve up and divide the world among themselves. The speed and unity with which they assembled their war machine in the Gulf is a manifestation of this process.

However beneath the apparent imperialist united front there are serious tensions and divisions. They are all united on the need to subjugate Saddam Hussein. But this is where unity ends. The Gulf is becoming a sphere for inter-imperialist conflict as each power fights for a bigger and better slice of the Gulf cake.

On 15 August George Bush declared that:

'there is no substitute for American leadership and American leadership cannot be effective in the absence of American strength.'

This is by no means the standpoint of Japanese and German imperialism which are presenting a major economic challenge to the US's international position. The US is seeking to pre-empt this challenge and is determined to sustain its leading international economic and political role. This is why it is using its massive military muscle in the Gulf to secure economic gain and defend its existing positions.

Japanese and German imperialism are not willing to accept unqualified US military control in the Gulf. Such control would allow the US an enormous economic and political lever over Japan and Germany who are massively reliant on Gulf oil. So despite US protests they are refusing

continued overleaf

RCG

FIGHT RACISM!
FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

STOP GULF WAR



BRITISH HANDS OFF
THE MIDDLE EAST!
IMPERIALIST TROOPS OUT!
SELF DETERMINATION FOR
KURDISTAN!
VICTORY TO THE
PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION!

MAP OF THE REGION



'...a place where the oil resources constitute a stupendous source of strategic power and one of the greatest prizes in world history.'
(1945 US State Department memorandum on Saudi Arabia)



JON KEMPSTER

continued from page 7

to share the enormous financial burden which is wreaking havoc with the US economy. By helping weaken the US economy further they hope also to limit its power in the Gulf.

Some sections of the Japanese and German ruling class go even further. Sensing danger, they are expressing discontent with constitutional restrictions on their own international military role. A Japanese Self-Defence Force lieutenant complained that Japan was 'being left outside the international political scene while other major industrialised countries are forming united forces to prevent the Iraq-Kuwait crisis from further escalating.' Meanwhile a German general stated: 'The whole of society needs to be prepared, not just to accept that its troops might have to intervene in a regional crisis but also to support them. Germans have to learn that such an action is respectable.'

Not surprisingly, the only imperialist government to give unqualified support to the Bush administration has been the Thatcher government. Representing a weakening and declining imperialist power, the Thatcher government hopes that by clinging to US military coat-tails, it too can defend its international position and its share of the Gulf cake against superior competitors. Such are the reasons for the British government's enthusiastic support for Bush's military moves. Thatcher has taken the initiative in imposing a military blockade of Iraq which she has insisted include food and medicine. Such is the reason why she has rounded on the European governments for failing to give more military support to the US.

IMPERIALIST TROOPS OUT OF THE GULF

The imperialist intervention is not directed exclusively against Saddam Hussein. It is directed at all forces capable of challenging imperialism's control of the Gulf. The taming or destruction of Saddam Hussein will serve to strengthen imperialism and reaction in the whole of the Middle East. It will strengthen the hand of Zionism and will further isolate the Palestinian revolution and its three and a half year intifada. If the US prevails in the area, the struggle of the Kurdish people and that of all oppressed peoples will be made a thousand times more difficult. It will bolster the rule of the reactionary sheiks and emirs in the Gulf and will inspire the local ruling class with the confidence to further repress the working class and peasantry using guns, whips and prisons.

Driven by a fierce hatred of imperialism and understanding well what imperialism is planning for the region, the poorest sections of the Arab masses and particularly the Palestinians have rallied to the defence of Iraq. Thousands have volunteered to join the Iraqi army in order to oppose US intervention. They also justifiably harbour a burning hatred for the ruling classes of Gulf states. A Jordanian expressed a widely held view when he said:

'the oil rich Gulf states have allowed the US a free hand with their wealth and oil while their poor stricken Arab brethren had to go on their knees for Arab aid.'

Like the Arab masses, the British and international working class can have no interest in supporting any imperialist intervention against Iraq. It is the duty of all British communists and democrats to uncompromisingly expose and oppose the Labour Party imperialists, left and right, who have supported the imperialist campaign against Iraq and the Arab people. Unlike the reactionary imperialists of the Labour Party, we call on all working class militants, on all socialists, democrats and progressives to demand the immediate withdrawal of all imperialist troops from the Gulf. ■

DEMOCRACY IN SAUDI ARABIA?

Saudi Arabia was seized by the Saud dynasty and named the property of a single family in 1932. The Royal Family, numbering 4,000, run the state with US advisers. By 1982, its foreign assets were \$140bn compared with a national product of \$120bn. Oil revenue is recycled on the international capital markets and on arms purchases from the USA, Britain, France etc.

Between 1983 and 1987 Saudi Arabia (population 10.8m) spent \$7.865bn on weapons: the fourth largest Third World buyer behind India, Iraq and Egypt. The USAF began construction of Dhahran Airbase in 1945, placing it within reach of Soviet borders. Saudi money and military have been used for counter-revolution in Yemen 1962-67, Oman 1965 onwards, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Afghanistan, Southern Africa, Central and South America, Palestine. It is a conduit for imperialist ambitions. When the 1965 Labour government signed a then record military deal worth £120m, Defence Minister Denis Healey explained that it did not undermine the US position in Saudi Arabia because the deal was tied in to a British purchase of US F-111 jets.

By 1973 Britain had 600 airforce personnel in the country. At the time 2,000 political prisoners languished in Saudi jails, others were publicly flogged to death or beheaded on the orders of Crown Princes. Women are in bondage. Half a century of US dominance has not achieved a single shred of democracy.

BACKGROUND IRAQ v KUWAIT

The Iraqi-Kuwaiti clash is a contest between two reactionary ruling classes for control over the wealth and oil of the region; a contest which intensified with the end of the bloody and expensive Iran-Iraq war.

The Iraqi regime emerged from the war facing an \$80bn debt and declining oil revenues as Kuwaiti over-production of its OPEC quotas lowered international oil prices to \$13 by June 1990. Angered by Kuwait's role, Saddam Hussein moved against Kuwait's ruling al-Sabah family. Kuwait's \$200bn overseas investments, its 100,000m barrels of oil reserves and its massive gold reserves were overwhelming temptations.

In his battle against Kuwait, Saddam Hussein brought into play Iraq's long-standing claim to Kuwait. Though justified historically, it is being used by the Iraqi ruling class to pursue its own narrow and reactionary interests. The imperialists are trying to whip up sympathy for Kuwait's 'right to self-determination'. However, this is not an issue. Kuwait is an artificial statelet formed by the British in 1899 to police the region. In 1961, it was granted independence. The Iraqi government under General Qasim announced that Kuwait formed part of Iraq and should be annexed. Within days British troops were airlifted into Kuwait.

Today Kuwait is a thoroughly reactionary entity. Only 60,000 men out of a population of approximately 2m have a vote. Women have no vote and no rights. Nor do the 1.2m foreign workers. The regime is a mirror of the other Gulf regimes - reactionary, anti-communist and bound hand and foot to imperialism. It is no surprise that they have all welcomed the US troops.

Saddam Hussein is also a vicious anti-working class and anti-communist tyrant. The imperialist powers are not however prepared to accept his takeover of Kuwait. He is not, like the al-Sabah family, a reliable ally. The Iraqi ruling class factions he represents display independent imperialist ambitions. With their massive oil wealth and a million-strong battle-experienced army, they aspire to become a major force in the region capable of dictating terms to Saudi Arabia and negotiating with imperialism from greater strength. ■

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

HOW BRITAIN AND USA PLUNDER THE GULF

For 170 years the peoples of Arabia and the Gulf have been slaughtered and suppressed in the interests of British imperial power. The British fleet shelled along the entire coastline of the Peninsula; British troops have poisoned wells, burnt crops, tortured and murdered Arab resistance; the Royal Air Force has bombed villages into oblivion. All of this accomplished by Conservative, Liberal and Labour governments alike with the connivance of Arab ruling classes prepared to sell their people's blood and land for gold. TREVOR RAYNE examines Britain's and the US's bloodthirsty history in the region.

Initial British interest in the Gulf stemmed from the conquest of India. By the 1880s India contained a fifth of Britain's overseas investment and took a fifth of its exports. Lord Curzon and later Winston Churchill maintained that India made the difference between Britain being a first and a third-rate power. To maintain Britain's control over the trade routes required a combination of brute force and financial inducements - bribes.

In 1819-20 British naval forces burned down a string of coastal towns along the Arabian peninsula and sank local fleets, calling them 'pirates' for attempting to retain control over their traditional waters. Trade was seen as a threat and destroyed along with the Omani Empire that stretched to Zanzibar. Local leaders were forced to sign a 'General Treaty'. The effect was to exclude all other foreign powers from the region. Scores of similar treaties were imposed across the region over the next hundred years.

In 1839 British troops sent from Bombay attacked and occupied Aden. The following year Hong Kong was taken and the Peninsular and Oriental (P & O) Steam Navigation Company was established. It rapidly became the most successful steamship company in the world, converting the Red Sea into a British lake and tying together British trading operations throughout Asia.

Disruptions were handled severely: when it was reported that 20 'Christians' had been killed in Jeddah in 1858 the Royal Navy bombarded the town for two days until 11 Moslems were yielded up. They were beheaded. The Annual Register recorded the hope that Moslems had been given a lesson 'of the irresistible power of England, which they are not likely soon to forget'.

By the 1870s Britain controlled two-thirds of the Arabian Peninsula's coastline: from Aden, north-eastward to Muscat and Oman, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Bahrain and up to Kuwait. The hinterlands were scarcely developed, there was no colonisation. Apart from the British ports, the Peninsula was driven into stagnation and decay.

With the decline of the Ottoman Empire British forces moved north and east to occupy Cyprus 1878, Egypt 1882, and southern Persia 1907. When oil spouted out of the Persian ground on 26 May 1908 Britain had in place a regional monopoly and network of political domination over the local feudal ruling classes that ensured an efficient imperialist exploitation of this most valuable new resource.

US CHALLENGE TO BRITAIN

The 'lucky strike' was made by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (later BP) using Burmah Oil funds. Anglo-Persian paid £20,000 in cash to the Grand Vizier in Teheran for a concession on an area almost twice the size

of Texas. With the defeat of Turkey in World War I Britain and France started carving up her possessions. The 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement gave southern Mesopotamia (Iraq) to Britain, the north to France. In 1914 an Armenian businessman, Calouste Gulbenkian, used money from Anglo-Persian (BP), Royal Dutch-Shell and the Deutsche Bank to form the Turkish Petroleum Company (later the Iraq Petroleum Company). The agreement between the parties went into abeyance during the war and in 1919 the German share went to France instead. The British government argued that the USA had not declared war on Turkey and should be excluded from the oil deal.

After the 1922 Lausanne Conference, Mesopotamia became the British Mandate of Iraq. The British military commander of Baghdad refused to let US oil scouts explore the territory. Consistent US economic and diplomatic pressure finally forced the British to accept US corporate participation in the Turkish/Iraq Petroleum Company. In 1928 Exxon (Esso) and four other major US oil companies gained a 23.7 per cent stake in the company. Thus the US entered into Middle East oil. Iraq was discovered to have some of the largest oil reserves in the world.

In 1933 Standard Oil of California (Chevron) bought oil concessions in Saudi Arabia for £50,000. Oil production began in 1939. King Ibn

Saud rewarded the US firm by extending the concession to cover an area equal to one sixth of the USA.

At the end of World War II, US economic power gave it the means to supplant British imperialism as the dominant force in the Middle East. In 1947, when Britain announced it would have to end its aid to Greece and Turkey, the US stepped in with dollars and military personnel. India gained its independence in 1947, Britain could no longer afford the costs of maintaining military forces in the Middle East sufficient to repel all challengers, the Arab rulers were growing richer and intent on wielding a greater measure of state power for themselves and Arab nationalism was on the rise.

Indicative was the 1948 Portsmouth Treaty which replaced the old British military mission in Iraq with a proposed Anglo-Iraqi Defence Board. In practice the Treaty meant that in the event of a threat to BP's interests Britain would send forces into Iraq, the RAF would have access to bases in Iraq should it wish to use them and Britain would train and arm the Iraqi government's forces. The Labour Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin said the Treaty was 'the beginning of a new series of treaties, regularising and expressing the friendship between this country and the Arab world'. It provoked huge riots in Iraq and the British placeman, head of government General Nuri el-Said, was forced to resign. He returned to power the following year.

Nevertheless, while British imperialism was intent on holding onto its position in the Middle East it was increasingly less able to do so. The denouement came with Suez (see FRFI 64).

During 1955 British-recruited and led forces clashed with Saudi backed forces at Buraini Oasis on the borders of Oman and what is now the United Arab Emirates. The Saudi forces were US-equipped and fight-



IMPERIALISM TOOLS UP: British Jaguar jets; US Stealth bomber; gas mask practice - the US has more sophisticated and plentiful nerve and chemical weapons than Iraq



VICTORY TO THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION!



Palestinian youth armed with a catapult against Israeli military might

ing in the interests of the US-owned Aramco company. Accusations flew back and forth about bribing sheiks (the British termed them 'annual subsidies'). Foreign Secretary Harold Macmillan said the oasis was 'vital to our interests'. The Saudi forces were expelled with two SAS squadrons and BP not Aramco gained two-thirds of Abu Dhabi's oil.

In October 1956 British forces, with French and Israeli support, attacked Egypt, which had nationalised the Suez Canal. The British government intended to remove Gamal Abdul Nasser's government and seize back the Canal. US imperialism, alarmed at the protests that swept the Arab nations and intent on enforcing its regional dominance to secure a steady flow of oil, acted swiftly. The US Federal Reserve Bank sold sterling and in one day a sixth of Britain's gold and dollar reserves vanished as the Bank of England tried to defend the pound. The US forced a humiliating end to the invasion: within three months British troops had departed and Prime Minister Anthony Eden resigned.

Although the British ruling class surrendered its dominant role to US imperialism, the British allied with it against the threat of Arab nationalism and communism to British-owned oil supplies.

US GLOBAL STRATEGY

In 1950 oil accounted for 27 per cent of world energy demands while in 1973 it had reached 48 per cent. Who controls oil controls much of the world. Between 1937 and 1967 the volumes of West European oil imports multiplied thirty fold, Japanese twenty fold and those of the USA fourteen fold. In 1939 Britain controlled 60 per cent of Middle East oil, the USA just 13 per cent. By 1960 Britain had 30 per cent while the USA had 65 per cent.

During the course of World War II the US government decided to get its hands on all the means of lifting, refining and distributing oil as an instrument of foreign policy. After 1945 the winning of sources of 'strategic materials' corresponded more than ever before to the military-strategic aims of the USA as the dominant power in NATO.

The Gulf states provide Western Europe with about 40 per cent of its oil needs, Japan 75 per cent and the highest US dependence around 20 per cent reached in the 1970s; it is often nearer just 10 per cent. Substantial as US domestic oil reserves are, US consumption of oil 1945-75 grew at approximately twice the rate of US domestic production. To reduce its own dependence on Middle East supplies and thereby increases its manoeuvrability in the region and power over its capitalist allies, the US ruling

class diversified its oil supplies to Venezuela, Ecuador, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Nigeria and Indonesia. The Korean War accelerated US control over Canadian oil output: by 1953 the US owned 73 per cent of Canada's known oil reserves.

When the Suez Crisis cut Middle East supplies to Western Europe by two-thirds, the US transnationals were able to maintain 90 per cent of normal purchases by their NATO allies by increasing output elsewhere around the world.

Middle East oil proved not only strategically important to the US ruling class but extremely profitable. Low labour costs, plentiful supplies and the terms of local concessions meant that every dollar invested in the Middle East in the 1950s generated three and a half times as much oil as each dollar invested in the Caribbean Basin. The rates of profit of US investment in the Third World reveal the following: in 1966 all industrial investment yielded an average of 17.1 per cent, manufacture 9.4 per cent, oil 25.7 per cent. In 1979 all industries 29.5 per cent, manufacture 13.5 per cent, oil 103.9 per cent. Similar figures obtain for most of the 1970s when the OPEC cartel was supposedly creating an 'energy crisis'; the reality was the super-profits of the US and British transnational corporations.

US CENTRAL COMMAND

As the Vietnamese drove on to victory a revolutionary wave covered 14 countries in the period 1974-80. Among the victories which the US saw threatening its hold on oil were Nicaragua, Grenada, Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Iran. Of these only Angola and Iran were oil producers but US imperialism saw its domination of the sea lanes threatened.

In 1977 President Carter announced the formation of a Rapid Deployment Force, for instant response to events in the Caribbean Basin and Middle East. A string of forward bases (naval and air) was established in Turkey, Israel, Somalia, Oman, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Diego Garcia.

By 1981 US military strength in the Indian Ocean and Gulf exceeded the defence forces of all the region taken together. Nuclear weapons were moved onto Diego Garcia. From January 1983 a permanent US Central Command was established to protect 'vital US interests', consisting of over 350,000 men. Those interests are deemed as covering 19 countries from Morocco to Pakistan. The US ruling class had in place a force intended to maintain its rule over oil and dominance over the Middle East; thereby to sustain its role as the world's major imperial power. ■

HYPOCRISY AND BARBARISM the imperialist record

George Bush justifying imperialist war preparations against Iraq proclaimed, 'There is no place for this sort of naked aggression in today's world.' Supporting him, Thatcher claimed that unless Iraq was subjugated 'other small nations... which could never feel safe'. This is nauseating hypocrisy. Below are but a few recent examples of imperialism's unrivalled hypocrisy and its bloody record of war and plunder against small nations.

■ **SANCTIONS** The imperialists and Thatcher in particular have stubbornly refused to impose sanctions on the apartheid regime which has butchered tens of thousands of people both in South Africa and in the course of invasions into neighbouring states. They have stubbornly refused to impose sanctions on Israel despite its record of genocide against the Palestinian people. Even in 1982, when Israel invaded Lebanon and murdered 20,000, the imperialists refused to impose sanctions. Zionism and apartheid are too profitable for imperialism.

■ **IRELAND** In 1969, the British (Labour) government sent troops to the Six Counties of Ireland to suppress the nationalist movement's struggle for democratic rights. In 1971 500 people were rounded up and interned without trial. Many were so brutally tortured that Britain was found guilty in the European Court and Commission. In January 1972, British troops gunned down 14 unarmed civilians at a peaceful demonstration. Since then, the British record has been one of torture,

murder and violence against the Irish people.

■ **VIETNAM** For 20 years until 1975 the US imperialists dropped a total of 14.5 million tons of explosives on the country, the equivalent of 700 Hiroshimas! 400,000 thousand tons of napalm, 72 million litres of chemical defoliants turned vast tracts of the country into dust and ashes. By 1968, over half a million US troops were operating in Vietnam. Four million Vietnamese were murdered.

■ **GRENADA** On 25 October, the US army invaded Grenada, a tiny Caribbean republic whose revolution led by Maurice Bishop and the New Jewel Movement had improved the lot of the impoverished masses. In their indiscriminate bombing and shooting, the US military murdered 1,500 people. The equivalent of 2m US dead. US forces even bombed a mental hospital killing 47 patients and nurses.

■ **LIBYA** On 15 April 1986, 100 US planes, flying from British bases, dropped 200 tons of explosives on the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi. Their aim was to kill Libyan leader Colonel Gaddafi and provoke a coup against his popular government. 43 Libyans were killed. This followed the March 1986 US attack in Libyan waters on Libyan patrol boats which cost over 100 lives.

■ **PANAMA** In December 1989 26,000 US troops invaded Panama. They destroyed working class districts killing an estimated 7,000 people. Mass graves are still being discovered.



The imperialists didn't give a damn when Iraq gassed thousands of Kurds in 1988

Self Determination for Kurdistan!

Kurdistan, with a population of nearly 30 million, has been divided between and oppressed by the ruling classes of Turkey, Iran and Iraq. Imperialism has for 70 years collaborated with these regimes in their savage repression of Kurdish people fighting for self-determination.

To retain control of Kurdish oil fields and rich agricultural land, the Iraqi government has pursued a genocidal war against four million Kurds. Hundreds of thousands of Kurdish peasants have been forced out of their villages by the Baathist army and air force. For over 30 years the Kurdish people have fought back. In March 1988 5,000 Kurdish people were slaughtered by gas bombs dropped on Halabja, and 10,000 more were murdered by gas in other villages. The arms, credits and technology to conduct this bloody war have been supplied by the imperialists.

So long as Saddam Hussein was murdering Kurds, Iranians or communists the imperialists were happy with him. Only when he snatched Kuwaiti oil did they consider him a 'dangerous criminal'.

The Turkish government has stationed 100,000 Turkish troops in Kurdistan and is using the Gulf crisis

as a pretext for another genocidal assault against Turkey's 15 million Kurds, and against the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan in particular. As in Iraq, the Turkish government has bombed, burned, destroyed and depopulated hundreds of Kurdish villages. The jails of Diyarbakir, Dersim and other major towns are full of political prisoners forced to endure unbelievable brutality.

The struggle for Kurdish self-determination is a central component of the anti-imperialist revolutionary struggle in the Middle East. In Iraq, the Kurdish people's struggle for self-determination and democracy is also a struggle for democratic rights for Iraqi workers and peasants. Communists must make common cause with the Kurdish people and break the imperialist silence by demanding:

Self-Determination for Kurdistan!

RCG

**FIGHT RACISM
FIGHT IMPERIALISM**

STOP GULF WAR



**BRITISH HANDS OF
THE MIDDLE EAST**

FINANCE CAPITAL

BIG OIL

Fifteen transnationals control the marketing of 20 major commodities. Just six account for over half the global trade in oil. They are part of the empire of finance capital: the merging of banking and industrial capital into giant cartels with interlocking ownership and command.

EXXON/ESSO - tied through loans, share capital and mutual directorships to Chase Manhattan Bank. Chase is the financial pivot around which revolve IBM, McDonnell-Douglas, Boeing, Caterpillar, Goodyear, United Technologies...

SHELL - Shell USA is part of the Chemical Bank group, including Lockheed, American Cable, Sears Roebuck, US Rubber and Woodwork. Shell UK is bound to Barclays, Rothschilds, Standard Bank of Scotland, Lazards, the Pearson Group, Standard Life, Rolls Royce and Hawker-Siddeley.

MOBIL - the financial core is First National City Bank (Citicorp). Pan Am, RCA, Kimberley Clark, Kennecott are some of this cartel.

BP - long at the heart of British capital, it meshes with the Bank of England, National Westminster, Lloyds Bank, Rothschilds, Standard Chartered, Barings, P&O, BAT...

TEXACO - combines money from the Morgan Guaranty Trust and Chase Manhattan. The Morgan group contains Fords, General Motors, IIT, General Electric, Coca Cola, Union Carbide, General Dynamics.

CHEVRON - bought Gulf for \$14bn in 1984 so joining the financial empires of the Mellon group, Chase Manhattan and Citibank.

Each of these vast combines is interwoven with arms manufacture. Their directors rotate their careers through boardrooms, high military command and government posts.

'Monopoly capital... is, by virtue of its fundamental economic traits, distinguished by a minimum fondness for peace and freedom, and by a maximum and universal development of militarism.' VI Lenin ■

SELF DETERMINATION FOR KURDISTAN!

RCG

**FIGHT RACISM!
FIGHT IMPERIALISM!**

STOP GULF WAR



**BRITISH HANDS OFF
THE MIDDLE EAST!
IMPERIALIST TROOPS OUT!
SELF DETERMINATION FOR
KURDISTAN!
VICTORY TO THE
PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION!**

British left fails the test

With the Labour Party backing the imperialist war drive, the socialist left had a duty to mount a united campaign to oppose British intervention in the Gulf. Instead there are almost as many small demonstrations as there are political tendencies, propelled by sectarian small group considerations.

On Saturday 1 September, the Socialist Workers Party organised its demonstration. The Revolutionary Communist Group, Socialist Outlook and Workers Power supported the march, but were refused the right to speak. The SWP refused to announce details of the 8 September demonstration organised by the Hands Off the Middle East Ad Hoc Committee, which was initiated by the RCP (the next step). The SWP boycotted the march. The RCP had boycotted the SWP demonstration. The Leninist, meanwhile, called their own demonstration for 22 September, which they promptly cancelled for lack of support (the slogans were imperialists out of the Gulf, Iraq out of Kuwait), and when they discovered that the Labour Left and the pacifists will be marching on 15 September with identical sentiments if not slogans. The 15 September Labour Left march will almost certainly be supported by all the left, anxious not to isolate themselves from the remains of the British Labour Movement.

All the British left, with the exception of the RCG, has rejected support for the Kurds and Palestinians as central slogans for the campaign. They will be unable to respond to the chauvinist hysteria which will accompany war in the Gulf. Imperialism will murder Arab workers with little opposition. For its part, the RCG will be supporting all demonstrations called to oppose the war, proclaiming the slogans: British Hands off the Middle East! Imperialist troops out of the Gulf! Self-determination for Kurdistan! Victory to the Palestinian revolution!

LABOUR BACKS IMPERIALIST WAR DRIVE

The Labour Party's main concern during the Gulf crisis has been to make itself more presentable to the ruling class. Intent on proving itself a trustworthy imperialist party deserving governmental power it has adopted a position even more militaristic than that of the Government. On 7 August, before the dispatch of imperialist forces to the Gulf, Shadow Foreign Secretary Gerald Kaufman was arguing for 'a complete quarantining of Iraq' 'by a natural blockade of the Gulf' and 'the interception of tankers in the Mediterranean and Red Sea identified carrying Iraqi or Kuwait oil.' BOB SHEPHERD argues that sanctions represent war by other means, with the same outcome.

Following the UN vote for mandatory sanctions, Kaufman's deputy George Robertson argued that 'to make the economic blockade bite it is essential, if necessary, that Iraqi tankers are stopped...'. Kaufman followed up with an attack claiming that the government's response had been 'slack, lax and negligent'. He also claimed that 'the UK government under Mrs Thatcher doesn't rank as much in international affairs as it used to or ought to.'

The Labour Party's response to British imperialism's intervention in the Gulf mirrors its response to the Falklands/Malvinas war in 1982. Then it supported and egged on Thatcher's warmongering, now it does the same. Then Michael Foot, Labour Party leader, stated that the first concern of the Labour Party was the safety and success of the Task Force, now Kinnoch gives his full support to the rapid deployment of British forces. Then, Foot explained that any opposition to the Task Force by sections of the Labour Party might have undermined international support for British imperialism. Now, Kinnoch refused, until the end of August, even to press for the recall of parliament to discuss the Gulf crisis, because of his fear that backbenchers might rock the boat. This is called democracy.

THE LABOUR LEFT AND THE UNITED NATIONS FRAUD

The imperialists have nothing to fear from the Labour Left's position. It is more sickening and more poisonous than that of the Labour leadership. And it is equally reactionary, cultivating the most vulgar illusions in the United Nations. Bann and his ilk do support an imperialist intervention against the Iraqi people... but they want it done peacefully. They want a 'solution of the region's problems under the auspices of the UN'. They

want Iraq to be defeated by means of 'peaceful' UN sanctions, not war.

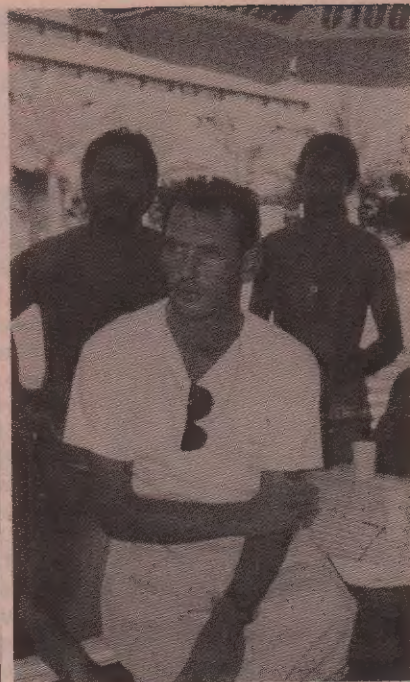
What sickly chauvinism, what vulgar petit-bourgeois illusions in the 'neutral', 'non-violent' role of sanctions and the UN. The United Nations has always been an instrument of imperialism. As the successor of the pre-World War Two League of Nations, it was formed as an alternative to the Communist International. Before the collapse of the socialist bloc, it was not always a pliable tool in the hands of the dominant imperialist power. Now it is, and is being used by the US, the British government and the Labour leadership as a means to legitimise imperialist aggression.

Not only did the UN impose sanctions on 6 August, but on 25 August it endorsed the use of military power to enforce them. Only Cuba and Yemen abstained from participation in this charade.

SANCTIONS - WAR BY OTHER MEANS

UN sanctions, fully supported by the USA, Britain, Kinnoch and Bann, are but one tactic, combined with other military, diplomatic and political measures, in imperialism's war against Iraq. They are designed to bring down the Iraqi government by starving the Iraqi people. No one claiming to be a socialist should have anything to do with any UN actions against Iraq.

Bann and the Labour Left have not failed to reveal their real concern about the use of military force against Iraq: 'The consequences of the war in the Gulf could be tens or even hundreds of thousands killed and the Arab nations solidly united against the West'. Tony Bann, like Kaufman, has once again chosen to defend the interests of the 'West'. Reject these shameless traitors and imperialist collaborators. ■



GULFS APART Top: Trapped French hostages hang out by the hotel pool in Baghdad. Above: Refugee Arabs, with their possessions on their backs, walk to the border to live in makeshift camps without food, water, or services.

WHITE HOSTAGES ASIAN REFUGEES

The Gulf crisis is exposing imperialist double standards - its contrasting attitude to hostages (white) and refugees (Asian and Arab) is one example. When Saddam refused to allow 5,000 British citizens to leave Iraq, the British ruling class and its press had a field day denouncing Hussein as a kidnapper and murderer who lacked all morality and 'was hiding behind women and children'. No British citizen is going hungry. They are not being left, without clothing or shelter, to the mercy of the desert with its scorching sun during the day and its freezing nights. They are not dying of disease or dehydration.

No! Such a fate is being reserved for more than 150,000 refugees from Asia and the Arab world. It would cost little to airlift them to their own countries. Yet the imperialist ruling classes who can find over \$1 billion every month to sustain their military assault on Iraq, have displayed a total indifference to these refugees trapped in a killer desert. The airlift has only begun one month after the crisis started and because of limited resources will take many weeks. Such indifference is not however without calculation. Most of the refugees are trapped in Jordan, which has refused to join the imperialist battalions against Iraq. The imperialists are cynically using the refugees as pawns in their efforts to force Jordan to join the sanctions campaign. Under pressure the imperialists have been forced to grant some aid. The EC has donated £37m. Thatcher's contribution is £1.4m and Bush's little more than £500,000. While Richard Branson was launching a mercy mission (read publicity stunt) to rescue a few white people, aid workers in Jordan were desperately looking for a television crew to publicise the plight of the refugees. Such is imperialist morality. ■

War is good news for arms dealers

The 'defence industry' is jumping for joy at the threat of war in the Gulf. To their great dismay, the end of the Cold War threatened to reduce their profits as imperialist governments came under pressure to cut military expenditure.

The Gulf Crisis changes all this. US Congress is having second thoughts about cutting the Administration's staggering \$306bn defence expenditure request. Britain's military equipment budget is \$11bn and due to rise to \$14bn by 1994. The EC's total military expenditure stands at \$43bn and is due to rise to \$50bn by 1994. These figures are now likely to rise, not fall.

Firms like British Aerospace, Vickers, Westland and Rolls-Royce will make millions more as new orders pour in. They have targeted Saudi Arabia which, in response to the Iraqi threat, has firmed up plans to spend up to \$20bn on arms in the next decade. Israel, also citing the Iraqi threat, is demanding massive increases in military expenditure.

Hundreds of millions of people suffer starvation, hunger, illiteracy and disease. Imperialism spends billions on instruments of death. Killing means profits, mass killing means mass profits. ■

MIDDLE EAST

BRITISH MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

Just a few of the British military interventions in the Gulf region:

IRAQ: 1918 anti-British uprising. 1920 RAF pioneer use of aerial bombardment of civilians on Iraqi villages. Concept of 'collective punishment' considered justified by results. Technique transferred to Somalia, NW Frontier etc.

IRAN: 1905-11 suppression of Tabriz rising. 1920 Tabriz. 1951 Mossadeq nationalises BP. Labour Prime Minister asks Chiefs of Staff to draft an occupation plan. 1953 Mossadeq overthrown in joint British-CIA coup. Shah installed. Oil concerns distributed between BP, Shell, Exxon, Socal, Texaco and Gulf. 1957 SAVAK secret police formed and British trained. SAS squadrons deployed against Kurdish guerrillas.

YEMEN: 1920-28 RAF bomb Aden hinterland revolt. 1962 North Yemen revolution: British troops train royalist forces. Deployment of 'ex'-RAF and SAS units under the guise of private company. 1963-67 liberation struggle in South Yemen. December 1964 Labour Colonial Secretary Greenwood refuses to allow UN-supervised elections. Helicopters used in tactical assault on Radfan Mountains. First combat use of Centurion 105 tanks; next appearance for Israeli army in 1967. One thousand pound bombs used to depopulate rural areas in 'free-fire zone' 'strategic hamlets' type strategy used in Vietnam. Wells poisoned, herds shot, crops burned. British government refused Amnesty International and the International Red Cross permission to investigate torture allegations. Torture confirmed in 1966 report. Methods transferred to Ireland.

OMAN: 1955-57 Buraini Oasis and Green Mountain disputes with Saudi-backed forces. Two squadrons of SAS deployed. RAF bomb irrigation works and villages. 1965 and 1970 UN Resolutions call for end to British domination of Oman. 1965 Dhofar Liberation Front leads guerilla war. Britain makes extensive use of RAF bombing and SAS. 1970 Britain uses Australian, Rhodesian, Saudi, Pakistani, Jordanese and Iranian military support against the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Gulf. General Timothy Creasey, later commander in North of Ireland, takes command of Omani government forces 1972-75. Returns to position in 1981. Omani forces and police remain British-officered through the 1980s.

Other post-1945 deployments include: Palestine 1945-48, Bahrain 1956, Jordan 1958, Abu Dhabi 1966, Bahrain 1971/74, Lebanon 1983, the Gulf Patrol etc, etc. ■



RIGHT: RCG contingent on the SWP march, 1 September



Paramilitary soldier attacks a demonstrator.

KENYA

The struggle continues

AM BABU

The spontaneous riots which erupted at the Kamukunji grounds, in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, on 7 July and resulted in several deaths from indiscriminate police shooting, are indicative of the underlying class contradiction between the privileged élites and the deprived masses of peasants and workers. Although the situation has now temporarily calmed down, the signs are that this is only a lull before a major storm.

Kenya is one of the four settler colonies in Africa which had developed a modicum of internally integrated economy, complete with its own bourgeoisie (whites) and an industrial working class, long before political independence. The other three are Algeria, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa. Like Algeria and Zimbabwe, independence was won after a protracted guerrilla armed struggle against the British colonial government and the landowning white settlers. That struggle is known historically as the 'Mau Mau' uprising of the 1950s.

In spite of this background, Kenya has emerged, ever since her independence in 1962, as a typical neo-colony. Described by the West as a 'success story', and projected as a model of capitalist development to be emulated by the rest of Africa, Kenya's internal stability has nevertheless remained on a touch-and-go basis. Anything could spark social unrest.

True, there has been a liberal influx of foreign investments, an expanding tourist trade, resulting in a healthy balance of payments boom, a rising GNP, and a crop of the new-rich élites. This, however, is one side of the story. The other side is grim.

This side is characterised by extreme poverty, rural stagnation, ghetto expansion in urban areas and massive unemployment forming the 'industrial reserve army'. The burgeoning lumpen population in towns and cities worsens social conflicts, leading to violent crimes and even banditry.

Male and female prostitution is rampant, especially in areas favoured by Western and Japanese tourists, as well as near the

British and American army and naval bases, making AIDS a serious health hazard threatening the very survival of the nation.

This conflicting picture of extreme poverty co-existing with flourishing wealth is a result of the neo-colonial model of economic development pushed down the throats of Third World leaders by both the IMF and the World Bank. Its key element is an alliance between the local élites and their foreign backers to intensify their exploitation of human and material resources of the country at the expense of the broad masses of the people.

In Kenya, this alliance has been developed to its finest and most vicious form. In addition to their political control, the local élites have 'bought' out the land-owning white settlers as part of the independence formula agreed to during the Lancaster House negotiations in 1962. According to this formula, the British government would pay two thirds of the value of any of the settler's farm and the remaining third to be paid by the local African buyer. In the event, figures would be manipulated in such a way that the local buyer would get the farm without paying a penny and the British tax-payer would foot the entire bill! The local buyer, in almost every case, would be a top bureaucrat or politician, who would then appoint the same settler as manager of the farm, with himself becoming an absentee landlord.

This has been the case both under Jomo Kenyatta, the first post-independence President of Kenya, as well as under the current ruler Daniel arap Moi. As a result of landowning and other business activities, Kenyatta left massive wealth and assets for his family to continue with the exploitation of the Kenyan masses.

But the new President arap Moi is said to have accumulated infinitely more personal wealth than Kenyatta in less than two years after he took over in 1978. In fact, he and Mobutu Sese Seku, President of Zaïre, are said to be among the richest people in the world, sitting on the shoulders of some of the poorest in the world.

The Mau Mau uprising has inevitably left its tradition of resistance in the country, and

while some of the fighters have been absorbed in the system, a large number of them and their descendants have been left out. One of the ironies of the Kenya situation is that some of the best of the latter are now regarded as 'dissidents', 'enemies of the people' etc, and most of them are now detained, together with the new breed of fighters for democracy, such as Raila Odinga, son of the veteran freedom fighter and former Vice President of Kenya, Odinga Oginga.

The core question in the current unrest is the mounting demand for democratic change. The ruling élites have been concentrating political and economic powers in fewer and fewer hands ever since independence. The masses on the other hand, in addition to being poverty stricken, find themselves deprived even of the limited political power they had in electing candidates of their own choice.

This frustration of powerlessness has been worsened by the unfettered corruption in high places, including the judiciary, which denies the people their rights under the law. The widening gap between the rich and the poor is gaining momentum, stimulated by the economic policies dictated by the IMF's 'conditionality' and the World Bank's 'Structural Adjustment Programme'.

The most positive result of the 7 July riots is the new drive by progressive politicians and organisations both within and outside the country, to come together in a united front and form an opposition bloc. If this is accomplished, there is no doubt that, given the current favourable objective conditions, sooner or later the people of Kenya will be able to uproot all the oppressive forces in the country and restore their independence and national dignity for which thousands of Kenyan fighters have sacrificed their lives. History is on their side. ■

Abdul Rahman Mohamed Babu is a former Zanzibari political leader. He opposed the neo-colonial regime of sheikhs which Britain left the island with at independence. After the revolution and union with Tanganyika, he became Minister of Economic Development in the new Tanzanian Government. He was later detained and since his release has lived in Britain and the US.

PRISONERS FIGHTBACK

10/74 Recent developments

KATE AKESTER

Following recent developments in Strangeways and other prisons, there has been renewed concern about the use of Rule 43 and Circular Instruction 10/74. The beginning of the Strangeways protest happened to coincide with Christopher Hague's appeal hearing, during which he was seeking Judicial Review of decisions to transfer him from Parkhurst to Wormwood Scrubs Prison on a 10/74.

Chris Hague had asked the Governor, the Board of Visitors and the Secretary of State for reasons for this decision without obtaining a reply which was either relevant to his question or satisfactory. It was apparent that the paperwork involved was not what it ought to have been. It also appeared that there was some confusion about the roles of the personnel involved. Chris Hague had been moved because of what he saw as a misunderstanding about exercise times for Category A prisoners. He made the point that he was not charged with any disciplinary

offence, and that at Wormwood Scrubs the same situation was not likely to arise because it was accepted that there were different arrangements for exercise there.

Mr Hague was also arguing that these were decisions which could be reviewed by the courts, and that in certain circumstances segregation might amount to false imprisonment. The Divisional Court, in July 1989, found for Mr Hague on the question of the reviewability by the courts of these decisions, and said that reasons should be given for decisions affecting a prisoner's status. However, they found against Mr Hague on the facts, and rejected his argument that segregation could amount to false imprisonment within lawful imprisonment and attract damages.

Both Christopher Hague and the Home Secretary appealed against this decision, and the Court of Appeal decided that Circular Instruction 10/74 was an unlawful use of Rule 43. However, they made it clear that if the Governor in the receiving prison exercised his discretion about the question of segregation and the Board of Visitors

did likewise, that use of Rule would become lawful.

Prisoners ought to be trying to ensure that this is now done. In particular, they could perhaps suggest to the Board of Visitors that if they decide to segregate them it could perhaps be for a few days only while they ascertain the facts to enable them to make a proper decision. They could be asked to limit segregation to, say, seven days instead of the usual 28.

Unfortunately the Court of Appeal decided that reasons did not have to be given for the decisions, and that a right to make representations did not exist. They agreed with the Divisional Court on the question of false imprisonment.

During the course of the Hague Appeal (this was a very eventful time!) another Court of Appeal held in the case of Weldon that where there was bad faith on the part of the authorities, or intolerable conditions, then segregation might amount to false imprisonment. Weldon's case had been appealed on the legal question alone, so the merits of the case were not considered. The cases of Hague and Weldon are going to the House of Lords together, but will probably not be heard until 1991.

One other thing to bear in mind is that during the Hague case great emphasis was placed by the Home Office on the ability of the Governor to take prisoners out of segregation via Rule 43, which indicates that where a medical officer thinks that a prisoner ought no longer to be in segregation, they must be returned to the wing. ■

Kate Akester is a practising solicitor

The Woolf Inquiry

ERIC ALLISON

The Taunton part of the Woolf Inquiry is over. The Inquiry team have adjourned for a month. But Taunton went much better for prisoners than Manchester.

Latham QC, counsel for the Inquiry, instructed his junior, Morris, to act directly for the prisoners. Unfortunately – and unlike counsel for the Home Office, POA, etc – he wasn't briefed. Nonetheless he cross-examined staff quite vigorously and many admissions (which will surely prove damaging to the other side) were elicited; for example much was made of the fact that staff at Pucklechurch kept the boys who came off the roof in totally bare cells, without clothes, for three days – and they were only boys, remember. A lot of serious allegations of violence were made by several good witnesses. Some of these lads (from Dartmoor, Bristol, Cardiff and Pucklechurch) gave very good evidence indeed and gamely resisted all attempts by counsel to rubbish their allegations. Well done to them all. How much of their evidence was believed remains to be seen, (and of course, there will be a limit as to how much they can be seen to believe inmates), but it is

a fact that Woolf himself has publicly declared his dismay at the way in which some inmates had been treated. I suspect that in particular the people who handled the Pucklechurch disturbance are in for a hard time when the report is published.

So, the position has improved since the Manchester hearings but it must not end there. Some of us out here will be working to keep the pressure up, and you, the prisoners, must mobilise. Don't stay quiet. For a start, petition en masse. And yes, I know the feelings that petitions are a waste of time, but has any prisoner tried to get every inmate to petition? See how that would clog the Home Office machinery up. Put down to see the Board of Visitors. And yes again, I know how useless they are, but you have a right to see them and they've got to listen to you. Put down to see them in your hundreds; they'll have to bring their beds into the nick! Write to your MPs – again en masse. They've got to answer you and some of them may actually take notice. Do all these things and encourage every single inmate you encounter to do the same. ■

The Woolf Inquiry resumes in London in the form of public seminars on 26 September.

PRISONERS FUND

Each month it costs £100 to send our newspaper into prisoners. A subscription for a prisoner costs £7.50 and prisoners cannot afford to pay this. We are appealing to our readers to take out a subscription to our Prisoners Fund.

• I enclose a donation of £ _____ to help pay for a prisoner's subscription to FRFI. (Cheques/POs payable to Larkin Publications)

Name _____ Address _____

Return to: FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

Picket of Wakefield Jail

On 11 August members and supporters of FRFI held a picket of Wakefield Jail to protest at the barbaric conditions under which Alan Lord is being held. Wing. He is in solitary confinement in a cell within a cell with no window and inadequate ventilation.

Wakefield prisoner Mark Stone Seed writes in a letter to FRFI: 'The good thing to come out of my recent spell in the block was that I was able to have a brief chat with Alan who like me got a bit of a buzz listening to sounds from the demo outside the jail at the weekend. Nice one!'

Robert Mawdsley 467637, now at Parkhurst, would like Mister Pease to contact him urgently.

Prisoners' Birthday

Vincent Donnelly 274064, 25 September, HMP Full Sutton, York YO4 1PS
 Danny McNamee L48616, 29 September, HMP Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5NX
 Harry Duggan 338638, 31 October, HMP Full Sutton
 Roy Walsh 119083, 1 November, HMP Gartree, Leicester Road, Market Harborough, Leicester LE16 7RP
 Sean Kinsella 758661, 5 November, HMP Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5RS
 Paul Norney 863532, 11 November, HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs WR11 5TZ

Poll Tax: millions refuse to pay

LORNA REID

Across the country millions of people are refusing to pay the Poll Tax. The potential exists to mount an organised political challenge to the Tax and to Thatcher. But this possibility is being consistently undermined by Militant.

Through their control of the All-Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation Militant is sabotaging all further mass mobilisations of the anti-Poll Tax movement. One week after Militant abandoned the demonstration in Trafalgar Square, Tommy Sheridan pledged at a press conference that a rally would be held in June in London. Within weeks the Federation announced that instead of a rally a festival would be held in London to greet the Glasgow to London People's march. Steve Nally, secretary of the London Anti-Poll Tax Federation, confirmed a £20,000 bank loan was secured by the Federation to equip the marchers and pay for the festival and £15,000 was raised by local anti-Poll Tax groups.

In August, the Federation announced that the festival had been cancelled because of lack of funds! Steve Nally now den-

ies the bank loan was secured. At a meeting of the Cardiff Federation Jeff Brightman, All-Britain Federation committee member, claimed that the Federation had no funds because it was paying off a £616,000 bill from the Metropolitan police for policing the Trafalgar Square demonstration!! Steve Nally has denied paying the bill! Who is telling the truth? What has happened to our money? We demand to know.

The Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign (TSDC) proposed to the London Federation on 2 September that to replace the festival a demonstration be held on 20 October which would pass through Trafalgar Square and include in its demands the defence of all those arrested as a result of the battle of Trafalgar

DEFEND RICHARD ROQUES
Richard Roques, RCG member, was arrested in Trafalgar Square on 31 March. He appears in Horseferry Road magistrates court at 12pm on 31 October, charged with Criminal Damage, Police Assault and Disorderly Behaviour. The CPS has reduced Richard's charges in order to deny him trial by jury. Support Richard. Demonstrate outside the court.

Square. This was backed by a number of APTUs.

Aware of the growing lobby for a central London march, Steve Nally, from the chair, announced that the officers of the Federation (all Militant) had met and decided on a route for the march (avoiding Trafalgar Square) and they, the officers, would have sole responsibility for organising it.

This was pushed through on the strength of votes from Militant members, disguised as (unelected and unaccountable) representatives of borough-wide anti-Poll Tax campaigns. Militant have tried to deflect attention away from the disgraceful role they played on 31 March by maintaining a veneer of commitment to the interests of the movement through their promise of another mass mobilisation and pledge to support the Trafalgar Square defendants. Underneath this veneer, Militant is determined to control the movement on their terms (governed by their ties to the Labour Party) and will use every undemocratic method at their disposal to do so.

We cannot allow our movement to be manipulated in this manner any more. We must support the Trafalgar Square Defen-

dants' Campaign and the prisoners; we must support the right to demonstrate where we choose – not where Militant and the police agree we can march; we must demand that our movement is accountable – demand that the Federation open its accounts for inspection by the movement. The anti-Poll Tax movement belongs only to those who are prepared to defend it.

The real strength of our movement is being tested on the streets, on the estates and in the courts. One million Londoners are refusing to pay a penny Poll Tax. Court hearings against non-payers have been turned into a farce – some cases against non-payers in Camden had to be abandoned in September after it was argued in court that Camden Council had not voted on its new capped Poll Tax rate. Nicki Rensten, RCG member, is seeking a judicial review of Camden's Poll Tax in the High Court. Other non-payers in the borough who have had liability orders granted against them have also taken High Court action against the Council.

The first bailiffs' action in London ended in defeat for Wandsworth Council when the bailiffs bottled out of confronting the hundreds of people who

had turned out to defend an estate in Roehampton in August. The tough action promised by Scottish regional councils is equally unimpressive. Despite the pledge of police assistance, Sheriff's officers have still to achieve a single warrant sale. Those really fighting the Poll Tax must be defended from the underhand manipulation being practised by Militant. ■

Support the prisoners

There are over 30 people in gaol following the Battle of Trafalgar Square and the subsequent arrests. Support from the outside is vital. Send them letters of solidarity.

Peter Chester 0025, HMP Pentonville, Caledonian Road, London N7 8TT.

David King RAO711, HMP Wormwood Scrubs, Du Cann Road, London W12.

Robert Robinson RAO741, HMP Brixton, Jebb Avenue, London SW2.

More details available from Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign, c/o Haldane Society, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP. Tel: 071 833 8958.

Panamanians 'incinerated' and 'dumped in the sea'

GARY ROSE

At a time when the US imperialists are marauding into the Middle East, evidence is surfacing about the atrocities committed by US forces during the December 1989 invasion of Panama. The invasion, like the threat of war against Iraq, had nothing to do with human rights and everything to do with world domination. The invasion of Panama was not launched to oust and capture Noriega but for the strategic importance of Panama.

The death toll of the invasion is not known. So far 14 mass graves have been discovered by human rights groups. There are many more waiting to be found. The first mass grave exhumed confirmed the absolute barbarity of the imperialists. Several children were found buried in one plastic bag, two bodies with their hands tied behind their backs showed signs of bullet wounds and a small bag containing the arms, legs and torso of a woman was found. Human rights groups are continuing the search for the dead. One volunteer said: 'Unfortunately we know we won't be able to find them all because many were incinerated and others dumped in the sea.'

According to former US General Attorney Ramsey Clark the number killed was close to 7,000. The Panamanian Human Rights Commission say that the dead number 15,000.

30,000 families have been left homeless as a result of the invasion. The working class district of Chorrillo was blitzed, shelled and finally flattened by US Army bulldozers. Many union offices were raided. Union leaders, like Juvenal Jimenez, leader of the Banana Workers' Union, were arrested. The journalists' union was banned. Stooze minister in the new regime, Ramon Lima, admitted the use of torture against those arrested for resisting the invasion. A prisoner who wrote to the new regime after being tortured was subsequently beaten to death. The veil of silence cast over many events during the imperialist invasion of Panama is hiding many assassinations, massacres and violations of human rights.

In 1977, due to unrest in Panama and growing vexation in the region with US policies, US President Carter was forced to sign the Torrigos-Carter treaty under which control of the Panama Canal is to pass to Panama and all US bases dismantled by the year 2000. The imperialists are not going to honour this agreement and nobody will get in their way.

Noriega was wanted in the US for drug smuggling! They invaded because an 'innocent US soldier' was shot by a Panamanian! The truth is that the imperialists have not stopped the drugs (drug trafficking in Panama has grown fivefold) and have scant regard for any life. The invasion was perpetrated to secure the area for US imperialism. Panama is intended as a military outpost to police Central and South America and the Caribbean. ■

Hands off Scargill

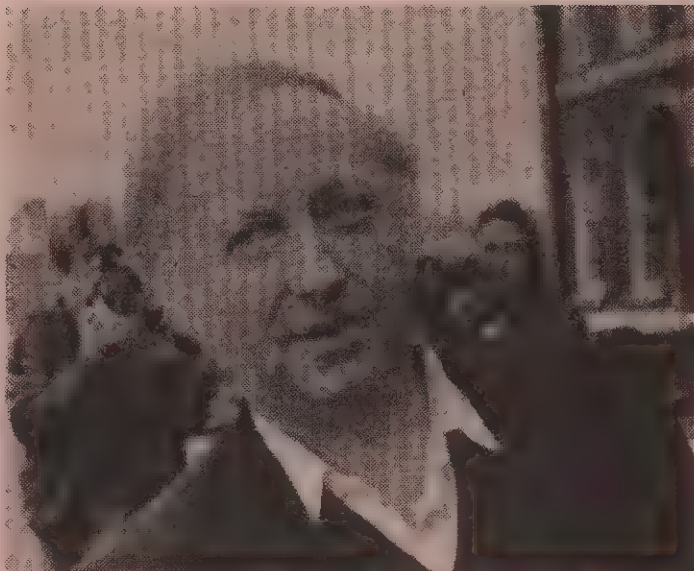
LORNA REID

Arthur Scargill and his deputy, Peter Heathfield, now face criminal charges under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act, including failure to maintain correct records of NUM funds. This is the latest stage of the conspiracy to destroy the influence of the NUM President. The conspiracy against Scargill is headed by Kinnock, Willis, millionaire boss baron Maxwell, and the Cook Report TV programme. Under pressure, NUM officials have agreed to conduct an inquiry in to the allegations against Scargill.

The Lightman Inquiry found no evidence of the allegations made against Scargill. Scargill himself has convincingly replied to the allegations made against him in his pamphlet, *Response to the Lightman Inquiry*, and verbally to the NUM's investigating team.

Scargill explained that it was necessary to set up separate bank accounts to avoid sequestration of vital solidarity donations. He shows that the accounts held by the IMO and the International Trust Account belong to organisations separate from the NUM. He has not denied he secured a loan from the MTUI which has nothing to do with NUM funds, and further this loan was paid back.

In his response he makes it clear that the Soviet miners' donations of £1.4 million were made into the MTUI (International Trust Fund), at the insistence of the Soviet Miners' Union – Scargill insists that had the Soviet miners wanted the money to go directly to the NUM rather than into the MTUI ac-



count this could have been arranged.

Recent statements from the Soviet miners' organisations, including the MI6-backed, pro-Western Soviet Democratic Labour Movement, have strengthened the attack against Scargill. Leaders of the Soviet Miners' Union claim Scargill is 'too Marxist' for them and there is a move to remove him from the presidency of the IMO. The SDLM is demanding that their money be returned. But new evidence claims that some of the Soviet donations may never have reached the IMO account in Dublin and were possibly misappropriated in the Soviet Union. Will Soviet miners examine their own books or are they content to be saddled with a leadership of the calibre of Willis & Co?

The case against Scargill, supported by the official Trade Union Movement, has nothing to do with alleged mismanagement of funds, but everything to do with discrediting the militant tradition upheld by Scargill. For

the whole duration of the 1984-85 Miners' Strike Scargill stood by his members and their families in the fight to defend jobs and living standards. Ranged against him were the state, the press and media and the Labour Party and Trade Union Movement. But more than this, Scargill refuses to allow the strike to be buried in history – he refuses to lie down. He insists on reminding Kinnock and Willis that they were scabs and remain scabs.

Kinnock and Willis despise Scargill for what he represents and are determined to destroy him. Kinnock's response to Scargill's demand at the TUC that the Labour leadership stand by its class as the Tories do theirs, was to condemn Scargill for asking for 'favours'. But Kinnock does favours for the ruling class every day without being asked.

Arthur Scargill must be defended. He represents a section within the working class which is prepared to fight. ■

GUINNESS AFFAIR

Fresh scandals

TREVOR RAYNE

'Some men will rob you with a six-gun, others with a fountain pen' runs the song, but for the latter it is usually perfectly legal.

It was something of an exception then when Mr Justice Henry pronounced sentence: Gerald Ronson, head of Heron International, 12 months prison and £5 million fine; Anthony Parnes, stockbroker, 30 months prison and £444,000 costs; Ernest Saunders, former Guinness chairperson, five years gaol; Sir Jack Lyons, guilty, to be sentenced on 25 September. All are equal before the law; no one, not even Mrs Thatcher's personal friends, are above it. The honour and prestige of the City is restored. So ran the fairy tale.

It took 48 hours, the time it took to process the prisoners through Brixton gaol and on to Ford open prison on the banks of Sussex's River Arun, for the story to be reduced to a mocking farce. 'A British allcomers record', suggested the National Association of Probation Officers, 'what about the 6,000 others who are lingering for up to eight weeks in local gaols awaiting allocation?'

Ford open has dormitories with partitioned cubicles, a snooker hall, gym, sports grounds and different film shows every night. There is no perimeter fence. The select few who go to Ford normally do so at the very end of their sentences, not the beginning.

The four guilty had engaged in a racket whereby £25 million of Guinness funds were used as inducements to buy Guinness shares during the 1986 bid for Distillers. It is illegal for com-

panies to buy their own shares, presumably in the sense that punters might be put off if casino managers were seen placing bets at their own roulette wheels.

This global multi-million pound fraud would never have come to light if Ivan 'Greed is all right by the way' Boesky had not spilled the beans to the US Securities and Exchange Commission on Wall Street, forcing the British government to take action. No Maxwell-led investigation team was put on Ronson's back. No Roger Cook programme probed through Mayfair clubs and weekend deals aboard luxury yachts in search of the 'missing millions'. Far from it, Saunders orchestrated his own photo-calls with children in tow. No tracing of corruption into the recesses of 10 Downing Street, where Mrs Thatcher received a letter from Sir Jack Lyons in 1986, when the fraud was in full swing, urging her to prevent the takeover bid being referred to the Monopolies Commission. She passed the letter on to the Minister responsible, Geoffrey Pattie. Ten days later, according to Richard Ingrams (*Private Eye* and *Observer*), the government announced the bid could proceed. Sir Jack received a suitable backhand for his efforts. He was (is?) a personal friend of Mrs Thatcher's, a frequent dinner host and benefactor.

Nothing is proven against Scargill and Heathfield, yet they are treated like criminals. Saunders and company are guilty, and feted with the best the establishment can provide. If you are going to steal, steal millions and preferably with a fountain pen. ■

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! 15 SEPTEMBER/15 NOVEMBER 1990 • 13

DAVID KITSON

TROTSKY

APARTHEID AND THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

Leon Trotsky was assassinated in Mexico on 20 August 1940. He died the following day. The 50th anniversary of his death has led to a spate of articles offering some kind of reassessment of his political and theoretical contribution to the Russian revolution and the communist movement. *FRFI* has been fortunate to receive a contribution on Trotskyism by David Kitson which critically assesses Trotsky's relevance from the standpoint of a South African communist active in the revolutionary struggle today.

David Kitson has been a communist for most of his adult life. As a member of the South African Communist Party and on the High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC, he spent 20 years in prison in South Africa. After his release he came to Britain and joined Norma and his family who were very active in the anti-apartheid movement here through their work in City of London Anti-Apartheid Group. He immediately hit the sectarianism of the official British AA Movement and after his principled refusal to attack City AA, he and Norma Kitson were suspended from the ANC. David believed that members of the SACP in Britain were centrally involved in bringing about their suspensions.

Last year the Kitson family moved to Zimbabwe to continue the struggle. They have in the last month been readmitted into the ANC following a visit to South Africa where they met and spoke with Mandela and Sisulu. While in Zimbabwe they received a letter and other material from a Trotskyist group in South Africa urging on them the central importance of the Trotskyist movement. David Kitson wrote a reply to their letter in September 1989 very critical of Trotsky and the Trotskyist movement. A year has passed with no answer to his letter. So he has made his letter available to *FRFI* for publication. Below we print an edited version of David Kitson's letter. It was written before the full extent of the counter-revolutionary developments in the socialist bloc became clear. (Ed)



Leon Trotsky

LENINISM OR TROTSKYISM?

Let us proceed to the nub of the matter. You say:

'We believe that Trotskyism is the revolutionary Marxism - the Bolshevism, the Leninism - of our time.'

This equates Trotskyism with Leninism and with Bolshevism. This, however, was not the opinion of Lenin. For instance, in his article published in May 1914 entitled 'Disruption of Unity under Cover of Outcries for Unity', Lenin said:

'The old participants in the Marxist movement in Russia know Trotsky very well, and there is no need to discuss him for their benefit. But the younger generation of workers do not know him, and it is therefore necessary to discuss him for he is typical of all the five groups abroad, which, in fact, are also vacillating between the liquidators, and the Party... Ryazanov described his role at the Congress of 1903 as "Lenin's cudgel". At the end of 1903, Trotsky was an ardent Menshevik, ie, he deserted from the Iskrists to the Economists. He said that "between the old Iskra and the new lies a gulf". In 1904-5, he deserted the Mensheviks and occupied a vacillating position, now co-operating with Martynov (the Economist), now proclaiming his absurdly Left "permanent revolution" theory. In 1906-7, he approached the Bolsheviks, and in the spring of 1907 he declared that he was in agreement with Rosa Luxemburg.

In the period of disintegration, after long "non-factional" vacillation, he entered into a bloc with the liquidators. He has now deserted them again, although in substance he reiterates their shoddy ideas.' (Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol 20, p 346-7)

Thus in the period before the revolution, when the disciplined Bolshevik party was being built, when revolutionary theory was being developed by Lenin and his associates; when one might hope to use the Russian example as a paradigm for the period we find ourselves now in South Africa, Trotsky made no contribution.

If one leafs through the *Collected Works* of Lenin, one finds that he and Trotsky were continually at odds over questions of theory and policy. For instance, in his pamphlet 'Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin', (February 1921) Lenin, in considering Trotsky's pamphlet 'The Role and Tasks of the Trade Unions', accused Trotsky of factionalism, saying:

'Behind the effort to present the "production" standpoint (Trotsky) or to overcome a one-sided political approach and combine it with an economic approach (Bukharin) we find: 1) Neglect of Marxism, as expressed in the theoretically incorrect, eclectic definition of the relation between politics and economics; 2) Defence or camouflage of the political mistake expressed in the shake-up policy, which runs through the whole of Trotsky's platform pamphlet, and which, unless it is admitted and corrected, leads to the collapse of the dictatorship of the proletariat.' (LCW 32, p 85)

It is clear that one either supports Leninism or Trotskyism; Bolshevism or Trotskyism. Trotsky, himself, in his letter of September 1926 to the Opposition said:

'We hold that, as experience has incontrovertibly proved that, whenever any of us differed with Lenin on any question of principle, Vladimir Ilyich was unquestionably in the right.'

(Trotsky's letter of September 1926, appended to the verbatim report of the sittings of the Political Bureau of the CC, CPSU (B), October 8 and 11, 1926)

In fact, Trotskyism is merely a deviation peculiarly attractive to members of the petty bourgeoisie. Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution. This is why we call the doctrine, which guides us in action, Marxism-Leninism, instead of just Marxism.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION

In his 'Address to the Communist League' made in 1850, when discussing the possibility of workers' power in Germany, Marx said:

'They must not be diverted from their course of proletarian independence by the hypocrisy of the democratic petty bourgeoisie. Their battle-cry must be: "The revolution in permanence."' (The *Marxist Reader*, Avenel Books, NY, 1982, p 71)

Lenin was not opposed to the idea of permanent revolution. Thus in his 'Social-Democracy's Attitude towards the Peasant Movement', he said in 1905:

'... from the democratic revolution we shall at once, and precisely in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organised proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution. We stand for uninterrupted revolution... we shall bend every effort to help the entire peasantry achieve the democratic revolution, in order thereby to make it easier for us, the party of the proletariat, to pass on as quickly as possible to the new and higher task - the socialist revolution.' (LCW 9, p 236-7)

And, in his statement 'The Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution', in 1921:

'Both the anarchists and the petty-bourgeois democrats (ie, the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who are the Russian counterparts of that international social type) have talked and are still talking an incredible lot of nonsense about the relation between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the socialist (that is, proletarian) revolution. The last four years have proved to the hilt that our interpretation of Marxism on this point, and our estimate of the experience of former revolutions were correct. We have consummated the bourgeois-democratic revolution as nobody had done before. We are advancing towards the socialist revolution consciously, firmly and unswervingly, knowing that it is not separated from the bourgeois-democratic revolution by a Chinese Wall, and knowing too that (in the last analysis) struggle alone will determine how far we shall advance, what part of this immense and lofty task we shall accomplish, and to what extent we shall succeed in consolidating our victories. Time will show. But we see even now that a tremendous amount - tremendous for this ruined, exhausted and backward country - has already been done towards the socialist transformation of society.' (LCW 33, p 51-52)

and he added (*ibid* p54):

'... this relation between the bourgeois-democratic and the proletarian-socialist revolutions. The first develops into the second. The second, in passing, solves the problems of the first. The second consolidates the work of the first. Struggle, and struggle alone, decides how far the second succeeds in outgrowing the first.'

Where Lenin took exception to his stance was that Trotsky left the peasants out of account, and, in fact, regarded them as hostile to workers'

power, whereas Lenin regarded them as allies of the workers who would become the vanguard in a country where 80 per cent of the population were peasants.

... AND SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY

Implicit in the quotations from Lenin given above, is the theory of 'Socialism in One Country'. In the foreword to *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the 4th International* (WRP, 1980), C Slaughter says:

'The programme of "Socialism in One Country", in fundamental revision of revolutionary Marxism, was the outlook announced by Stalin in October 1924.'

Nearly a decade before 1924, however, in his 'Slogan for a United States of Europe', Lenin said in 1915:

'... the slogan of a United States of the World would hardly be a correct one, first, because it merges with socialism; second, because it may be wrongly interpreted to mean that the victory of socialism in a single country is impossible, and it may also create misconceptions as to the relations of such a country to the others.

Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone.' (LCW 21, p342)

In his 'Peace Programme', published in 1917, Trotsky took issue with this, and in his 1922 edition added that 'real progress of a socialist economy in Russia will become possible only after the victory of the proletariat in the major European countries', in defence of his theory of the permanent revolution.

After the revolution Lenin, building socialism in the USSR, repeatedly dealt with this theme. Thus in 'The Importance of Gold' in 1921, he said:

'Marxism alone has precisely and correctly defined the relation of reforms to revolution, although Marx was able to see this relation only from one aspect - under the conditions preceding the first to any extent permanent and lasting victory of the proletariat, if only in one country. Under those conditions, the basis of the proper relation was that reforms are a by-product of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat... After the victory of the proletariat, if only in one country, something new enters into the relation between reforms and revolution. In principle, it is the same as before, but a change in form takes place, which Marx himself could not foresee, but which can be appreciated only on the basis of the philosophy and politics of Marxism.' (LCW 33, p115)

If there was 'a fundamental revision of revolutionary Marxism' in this connection it was made by Lenin and not by Stalin. It was Lenin who was (and is) the theoretician of the age of imperialism, in which the world has been divided up and where capitalism in its monopoly stage develops and decays at different rates in different countries. This makes revolutionary situations develop in different countries at different times. Time has shown that his analysis is correct, and not the parroting of Engels' position given in 1847 in his *Principles of Communism*, written when capitalism was in the ascendant, before the advent of monopoly capitalism.

Also in 1921, in 'The Tax in Kind',

'Is an immediate transition to socialism from the state of affairs predominating in Russia conceivable? Yes, it is, to certain degree, but on one condition, the precise nature of which we now know thanks to a great piece of scientific work that has been completed. It is electrification... But we know perfectly well that it will take at

least ten years only to complete the first stage of this "one" condition... (LCW 32, p 350)

The Soviets say that the industrial base for socialism was built by 1936 in the USSR. There is public ownership of the means of production, the dictatorship of the proletariat was achieved in a proletarian revolution – the Bolshevik revolution – and has continued sometimes in most unpleasant forms. The conditions laid down by Engels, in his answer to question 18, as being necessary for socialism in *The Principles of Communism* have been fulfilled in the USSR. In his *State and Revolution*, Lenin pointed out that the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie can be diverse in form. Marx observed that new societies bear birthmarks from the old ones that gave rise to them. It follows that dictatorships of the proletariat can also be diverse in form, depending on the past history of the country in which it arises. Thus Lenin said that the Soviet Union was a workers' state with a bureaucratic twist. Unfortunately the twist got worse instead of better. Already in Lenin's day Trotsky was spouting about degeneration and Thermidor. As he could not recognise the reality of socialism in one state he would have to, wouldn't he? It should be remembered that initially his stance was anti-Leninist after the revolution, before it became anti-Stalinist.

Change in socialist societies proceeds by means of the working out of contradictions in the society concerned. These exist particularly as socialism is a transitory form between capitalism and communism. The situation is aggravated as the chain of imperialism (according to Lenin) breaks at its weakest links and not at the strongest. For instance there is the contradiction that the socialist state has to protect what Lenin called 'bourgeois law'. If rewards are according to one's contribution (and not needs) then the enjoyment of such rewards has to be protected. This continues until the state withers away, even after the ending of capitalist encirclement. The latter introduces contradictions between the need to defend the socialist fatherland and the duty to support proletarian and national liberation struggles in other countries. However it is a *sine qua non* of dialectical materialism that such contradictions would exist and would have to be resolved. As the socialist society develops and changes so does the nature of the contradictions that come to the fore.

Socialism does not proceed according to blind social forces like former social systems. It has to go according to plan. If the rulers of such a society commit errors, crimes and atrocities; if they do not keep pace with changes in the basis of the society, then the development of socialism suffers. Indeed uncorrected mistakes can even result in counter-revolution succeeding. Especially when there is imperialist encirclement. Thus every existing socialist society displays blemishes to the eyes of purists.

THE RELEVANCE OF TROTSKY'S PROGRAMME

Maybe Trotsky got it right after he was expelled from the Soviet Union? Let us examine the Transitional Programme of the 4th International which he wrote. He entitled it *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International* (WRP, 1980). It was published in 1938 as the founding programme of the 4th International. For starters it can be observed that capitalism is far from dead.

Marxism is said to be a guide to action. With half a century of hindsight, since it was written, one can review how the Transitional Programme, written by Trotsky himself, has fared as such a guide. How did it work? The answer is that it didn't work at all. During the last 50 years there have been the most tremendous conflicts

None of them has been led by the 4th International or any of its sections.

Trotskyists have not led any proletarian revolutions; nor have they mobilised any proletariat for revolution; successful liberation struggles did not proceed under the banner of the 4th International; the proletariat in capitalist countries are not armed; there are few single national banks; fascism and nazism were not overthrown by 4th International-led organisations; factory committees in capitalist countries are non-existent as pictured by Trotsky; the trade union leadership has not been replaced by militants; the leaders of the changes proceeding in the Soviet Union are not Trotskyists; nor are the dissidents there; nowhere has the 4th International led the tide of revolution. Half a century of history has shown that the *Transitional Programme* is useless as a guide to action.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN REVOLUTION

Everybody recognises that Trotsky made a substantial contribution to the success of the Bolshevik revolution. Often Lenin worked with Trotsky. He was ready to work with anyone for the success of the revolution regardless of ideological differences. Sometimes Lenin even made Trotsky his spokesman. We think it wrong to regard Trotsky as a criminal, or to use the appellation 'Trotskyite' as a mindless smear. He should be rehabilitated from being regarded as a criminal. But all this is not the point. What is needed is a revolutionary theory as a guide to action resulting in the victory of socialism in South Africa. Here history has shown that Trotsky and Trotskyism are useless. You have to make your own analysis, based on Marxism-Leninism, of the problems of South Africa and tested in the light of your practice in the struggle.

Stalinism is just another swear word. Stalin is now thoroughly exploded. I regard Stalinism as a despotic authoritarian bonapartist attitude which arose after the success of the revolution in the Soviet Union. It is inaccurate as a description of the leadership of the South African Communist Party (SACP). They haven't won anything except comfortable livings in London. A more accurate description of the SACP, if one goes in for labels, is to say it is Kautskyite. Kautskyism is the defence of opportunism under the cover of revolutionary phraseology, ie, camouflaged opportunism.

In *Work in Progress* (WIP) 60 there is an article on the new programme of the SACP, *The Path to Power*. The leadership of the SACP is recorded as saying:

'In the new programme Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) is more firmly subordinated to a class analysis of our situation and is treated as a variant of bourgeois domination. There is no abstract model of a capitalist society.'

In the 'Preface to the First German Edition' of *Capital* Vol 1, Marx says:

'In the analysis of economic forms, moreover, neither microscopes nor chemical reagents are of use. The force of abstraction must replace both.'

Then Marx went on to develop the concept of abstract labour which he used to deal with the process of production of capital in capitalist society, not any particular capitalist society, but an abstract capitalism with features that are displayed in common with any particular capitalist society, each of which has its past history, ie, the content of all capitalist societies is the same but each has its own individual form. These common features enable the analyst to make predictions about any capitalist society through applying a Marxist analysis which applies to them all.

So at this level of abstraction, is South Africa a capitalist society? When I participated in the discussion

in 1961 on the draft of the original programme 'The Road to South African Freedom', I submitted a document which I had drawn up which showed that South Africa was indeed a highly developed capitalist society in which the capitalist mode of production was completely dominant and part of the imperialist world. Any former mode that might still be extant was an insignificant fossil, in the economic sense, preserved because it suited the needs of capitalism. The petty bourgeois liberal intellectuals who dominate the SACP have never forgiven me, but cunningly sidetracked me then so that my analysis, and doubtless similar ones, did not receive proper consideration.

In fact South Africa is one of the most highly developed capitalist countries in the world today, an integral part of world imperialism, with highly developed centralisation and displaying many of the technical prerequisites for an immediate transition to socialism. It is also one of the most savage dictatorships of the bourgeoisie that ever developed. As such, looked at from a purely class point of view, there can be no revolution to bring the bourgeoisie to power, it is already in power.

From the class point of view, considering only economic categories, the only possible revolution left on the agenda is the proletarian revolution. It does not follow from this that should a revolutionary situation develop in South Africa (and according to me it has more than once) it would be successful in establishing workers' power, or for that matter, even a more democratic form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie than that under which the South African nation state already suffers. In fact revolution has not succeeded yet in any highly developed capitalist state.

This is not only due to the undoubted strength of the state, but also due to the cunning of the capitalist class and its ideological apparatus in suborning the workers away from having a proper workers' attitude to life.

On the other hand, unlike any other

country where a socialist orientation has succeeded already, (but not in South Africa), the working class is not merely a revolutionary vanguard class leading other classes which outnumber it, but it is the main force in South Africa, in the struggle against oppression. It is the most numerous, the most militant and the best organised. The vital factor that it lacks is the presence of an accepted Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party leading it.

Of course there is no pure capitalism anywhere in the sense that it has only two classes. The nearest approach is the situation in Britain. So we have to proceed to lower levels of abstraction in considering the actual complexity in South Africa. There is, for lack of a better descriptive term, the peasant class. Until its land hunger is satisfied, it can be most revolutionary. There has been a state of emergency in the Transkei ever since the bantustan was set up because of the presence of the Hill Committees. Then there is the petty bourgeoisie, a lot of them, imbued with bourgeois ideology, who want the reform of apartheid, but who could be won to the workers' cause. A right wing representative of their desires is the SACP, which in WIP 60 says:

'But in a truly democratic post-apartheid state the way would be open for a peaceful progression towards socialism.'

They mean peaceful progression with the Boers no doubt. In fact there will have to be a violent revolution in South Africa, to establish workers' power, monolithic proletarian discipline and a fierce dictatorship of the proletariat to expel every racist from the state (one third of the whites are employed in one way or another by the state), if the savagery of the present state is anything to go by.

There is either bourgeois democracy or proletarian democracy. One can imagine what is meant by 'true' democracy. Of course Lenin observed that the form of bourgeois state best suited to the working class is a democracy, but only because it is easier to work for revolution under

legal conditions. In South Africa there is no chance of this. The reformists however would like to limit the political and social upheavals that are currently shaking South African society to bourgeois democratic reform where they would get a share of the cake and of political power, while the oppression of the workers would continue.

If one goes through the volumes of *Capital* collating the references to a state in which gold is actually produced an interesting picture emerges. Gold is immediately saleable, no process of realisation is needed, yet it does not enter into the subsistence of the worker. It is both a measure of value and a store of value. To meet these requirements, in gold mining, there is an emphasis on the production of absolute surplus value rather than on relative surplus value, although the latter is not neglected particularly above the ground of the mines. The former requires a large, underground, impoverished, poorly paid labour force. This is behind the excesses of apartheid, the racist capitalist state, the migratory labour system, the pass laws, the iniquitous oppression of the masses in South Africa. The past history of South Africa has made the requirements of the mines the custom and practice of the whole capitalist system there. This analysis has been made wholly within the parameters laid down by Marx in considering capital. Such oddities as CST are not required except to confuse the issue.

In fact South Africa is a capitalist country, and an imperialist country in its own right, dominated by a military-industrial machine and an integral part of the world imperialist system. It provides the gold which imperialism has to have to make exchanges by means of changes in its ownership. In the event of a workers' victory in South Africa the whole imperialist world would be shaken to its core. So the oppressed masses of South Africa are facing not merely their own oppressors (dubbed the internal colonialists?) but world imperialism. It will be a great day when they win. ■



FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!



A world divided

The ideologues of free enterprise are celebrating the demise of the socialist bloc and the headlong rush to the market place. For them, capitalism has been completely vindicated. Now the imperialists are beckoning the socialist countries to embrace them and share with them their freedoms and prosperity. These only exist through centuries of plunder and exploitation of the oppressed nations. Today three-quarters of the world continue to suffer poverty and starvation on a massive scale. Two recent publications, by the World Bank and United Nations Development Project, provide further evidence of the rapidly deteriorating conditions faced by the Third World. VIRMAN MAN looks at the reality of imperialism for the people of the Third World, and argues that no progress is possible while imperialism exists.

In the Third World more than 1.2 billion people – a quarter of the world's population – are living in absolute poverty, with an average annual income of less than \$370. 800 million go hungry every day. 150 million children (one in three) under five suffer serious malnutrition, and each year 14 million children die before reaching their fifth birthday. 1.75 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water. 900 million adults are illiterate. These stark facts, available from both publications, give some idea of the desperate conditions endured by the oppressed peoples of the world.

The deprivation suffered is in sharp contrast to the relative wealth and comfort enjoyed by those living in the developed countries. They make up just 23% of the population, yet they have 83% of the world's gross national product. They consume three-quarters of the world's energy and grain. In the 'developing' countries life expectancy at birth is 12 years lower, and in sub-Saharan Africa it is 23 years lower. There are nearly ten times more people per doctor (4,800 compared to 500), while Sub-Saharan Africa has an average of 24,600 people per doctor. In the Third World women are twelve times more likely to die during childbirth; infants six times more likely to die in their first year (79 per 1000 live births); and children seven times more likely to die in the first five years (121 per 1000 live births). (See Table 1)

The World Bank and UNDP reports spend much time trying to define

poverty, and indeed the UNDP constructs a completely new measure, the Human Development Index. No matter which variables are used, the two reports are unable to explain how poverty has come about.

The countries of the Third World have been underdeveloped by imperialism's drive for profits: exploiting their resources and paying low rates for materials and labour. By arguing that 'the domestic policies of the developing countries themselves – for example, regarding exchange rates, levels of protection, and other interventions – are largely responsible for the countries' success or failure in world trade' (p121), it is clear that the prescriptions offered by the World Bank, far from being the solution, are part of the problem.

In reality the developing countries struggle against trade protectionism. By providing price supports and subsidising their own farmers, OECD countries increase their own agricultural exports and depress world prices, cutting the foreign earnings of net producers in the Third World. Non-tariff barriers (import quotas) are imposed on a third of all the agricultural exports of the developing nations. Sugar, animal and dairy products, tobacco, rice and groundnuts are particularly affected.

High tariff duties are levied on imports requiring processing. This practice promotes high value-added processing industries in the developed countries and discourages it in developing countries. Tariffs on developing countries' processed fruit and vegetables exports are double

those on fresh fruit and vegetables. The result of this policy is that more than 70% of the Third World's exports of meat, fish and vegetables are unprocessed, as are 90% of sugar and cocoa exports, the prices of which are determined not in Havana or Accra, but in Wall Street and the London Futures Market. The Third World is used as a 'source of primary commodities for the developed world to make manufactures which are then sold back to the Third World at prices which produce massive profits.

In the 1980s the unequal terms of trade for the Third World worsened. Between 1980 and 1987 Latin America and the Caribbean experienced a 23% deterioration; Colombia 30% and Bolivia 49%. By comparison the United States transnationals secured greater dominance of these markets. According to the US Department of Trade, total capital transactions in the region in 1989 led to a net transfer of \$10 bn to the US. For each dollar of investment, the US extracted more than two in profits.

Whereas in the early 1980s there was a net transfer of capital to the oppressed nations, by the end of the decade the direction had reversed: in 1981 there was a positive flow of \$43bn; in 1988 the transfer was \$33bn from the oppressed nations. After the first major international debt crisis in 1984 Latin America lost \$153bn during five years in net flows abroad (not including capital flight), equivalent to 15% of its exports.

With unequal terms of trade and net loss of capital from the economy, the oppressed nations in the 1980s

also suffered massive inflation. (See Table 2)

At the beginning of 1989 the developing nations owed their foreign creditors \$1.3 trillion – more than half their combined gross national product and two-thirds more than their annual export earnings. In 1973 the external debt of the oppressed nations was equivalent to 19% of their GNP. By 1980 this had risen to 25%; in 1988, for external public debt alone, the figure had reached 36%. Individual countries have crushing debt burdens: Mozambique's outstanding debt in 1988 was equal to four times its GNP. Brazil alone owed \$101bn in 1988; Mexico \$89 bn; India \$51 bn and Argentina \$50 bn. (See Table 3)

Once they enter into debt the oppressed nations are unable to escape. The greater their indebtedness, the greater the power of the imperialist banks and the multilateral agencies to dictate terms to them. Every 1% increase in interest rates squeezes a further \$4bn a year from the oppressed nations. Repayment of the interest on the loans becomes an impossibility: Argentina's debt service in 1987 amounted to 52% of its exports of goods and services; India's interest on its external debt in 1988 was 50% larger than the amount of overseas development aid it received in the same year. (See Table 4)

Debt servicing bills are now in excess of \$200 billion a year for all debt-ridden nations. Only four out of 21 Latin American nations are up-to-date on payments to private creditors, whilst eight are in arrears to the World Bank and 11 to the International Monetary Fund. In the 17 most indebted countries per capita GDP declined on average by one per cent a year throughout the 1980s.

Debt rescheduling and new loans are made on the condition that the prospective recipient undertakes 'adjustment programmes' approved by the IMF. These entail cuts in government spending on social services such as education and health provision, with reductions in consumption patterns and wages. Such austerity measures bring further suffering to the masses.

'Development aid', much flaunted by the imperialist governments as their contribution to fighting poverty, serves rather to increase their stranglehold over the oppressed nations. Nearly two-thirds of all bilateral aid distributed by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee is 'tied'. Aid is only sent if the receiv-

ing country agrees to purchase goods and/or services from the donor country.

The analysts of the World Bank argue that 'the disbursement of large volumes of aid should generally be confined to countries that are pursuing appropriate policies designed to generate income-earning opportunities ...' (p 136) and 'it will be far easier to reduce poverty if the platform is one of low inflation, lower real interest rates, and open trade than if fluctuating prices, high real interest rates, and restricted trade prevail. As always, progress in the developing countries is closely bound up with the policies of the industrial countries.' (p 7)

The choice on offer is between the market and starvation. Should the market be rejected, then imperialism is ready to wield the big stick. Since 1945 more than 25 million people have been slaughtered in imperialism's war against the oppressed, and millions more have been maimed, tortured and made homeless.

In the face of the combined onslaught of all the imperialist countries, the Cuban Revolution has shown that it is possible to confront the problems of poverty even before achieving major developments or attaining substantial wealth.

Life expectancy at birth in Cuba is 75, compared to 74 for the developed countries; infant mortality rates average 15 per 1000 live births in the developed countries whilst in Cuba it is 11.1. There are 500 inhabitants per doctor compared to 300 in Cuba; and everyone in Cuba has access to free health services. The daily calorie supply as a percentage of requirements is marginally higher in Cuba than in the developed countries (135 per cent against 132). All children in Cuba receive primary education, compared to 97 per cent in the developed countries; and the drop-out rate is only seven per cent as against 11 per cent.

Imperialism wants to destroy the Cuban revolution because of what it has achieved, because it shows that there is an alternative and because of the hope it has given for millions.

Imperialism is central to the continued suffering of the world's poor. Without the enslavement of oppressed people it would not be able to sustain its wealth and power. The challenge to poverty will not come from economic analysts but from the millions whose survival depends upon the very destruction of imperialism. ■

TABLE 1

	Life expectancy at birth 1987	Infant mortality (deaths per 1000 live births) 1988	Daily calorie supply (% of requirement) 1984-88	1000s per doctor 1984
Mozambique	47	172	69	38.0
Ethiopia	42	153	71	77.4
Bangladesh	52	118	83	6.7
Bolivia	54	108	88	1.5
Britain	76	8	128	N/A

Source: Human Development Report 1990, UNDP

TABLE 2

	Annual average inflation (%) 1980-1988
Bolivia	492.8
Argentina	290.5
Brazil	188.7
Peru	118.1
Uganda	100.7
Zaire	56.1

Source: World Development Report 1990, World Bank

TABLE 4

Total long term debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services		
	1970	1988
Ethiopia	11.4	37.4
Indonesia	13.9	39.6
Mexico	44.3	43.5
Brazil	21.8	42.0

Source: World Development Report 1990, World Bank

TABLE 3

Total external debt as percentage of GNP		
	1978	1988
Ethiopia	8.5	50.6
Tanzania	20.7	140.1
Somalia	24.4	185.2
Zaire	9.1	118.0
Jamaica	73.1	127.2
Peru	37.3	56.1
Mexico	16.2	52.4
Argentina	23.8	58.6

Source: World Development Report 1990, World Bank

Human Development Report 1990, UNDP, Oxford University Press 1990

World Development Report 1990 – Poverty: World Development Indicators, World Bank, Oxford University Press 1990 (available through Microinfo Ltd)